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# SHOP & DINE

## High-tech Redford firm likes to keep it local

By Matt Jachman  
STAFF WRITER

A neighborhood business strip with a dry cleaners, an auto repair shop and a couple of pizzerias isn't the sort of place you'd expect to find a high-tech firm.

"I get that all the time," said Jim Fera of Web and Network Solutions, located in a storefront on Six Mile west of Beech Daly.

But Fera likes the location for what he calls his "fly-under-the-radar" company.

"It helps us satisfy the needs of the communities around here better," he said.

WAN Solutions is a computer and computer network service company that deals with small- and medium-sized businesses. WAN provides Internet

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access and e-mail capability, maintains and repairs networks, designs, builds and hosts Web sites, registers domain names and more.

"We do some pretty intricate technical work," Fera said.

Fera, who co-owns WAN Solutions with Ryan Gunn, said he prefers to work with smaller local businesses, instead of giant corporations, and likes to see how technology can change and improve them.

"To watch technology change the world, and be part of it, it's huge," he said.

Fera and Gunn worked together at Advanced Data, a technology company that was based in Redford, and purchased it in 2002, changing the name. They located in Dearborn Heights for a couple of years.

In May of 2004 they opened the storefront on Six Mile, a former dry cleaners that had been vacant for years. Fera said the 3,000-square-foot building needed extensive renovation.

"There was nothing here. It was an eyesore," he said.

WAN's area clients include the Redford-based Mr. Alan's Shoes chain, Buddy's Pizza, Dakota Bread Co., and Lynch's, the retailer of theatrical and dance costumes and supplies.

"They're located in the community," Rebecca Thomason, the assistant controller at Mr. Alan's Shoes, said of WAN. "They've got enough resources to provide good service but they're small enough that we matter to them."

Thomason said she appreciates that WAN is involved with the Redford Jaycees and the Redford Township Chamber of Commerce.

"It's just a nice small group of guys" who are easy to work with, she said. "They care."

Zoom Photo



Tom Hawley | Staff Photographer

Jim Fera is co-owner, with Ryan Gunn, of Web and Network Solutions in Redford.

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WAN has a second location in Southfield, where its servers and other computer equipment are kept. The company owns its servers, rather than renting space on another company's servers.

"It gives us a better opportunity to be price-competitive," Fera said. "We can make our own choices and our own decisions."

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