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## CUMBERLAND COUNTY

## Small-bank pool launches telecom firm

BY DAVID DAGAN

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The attention of the telecommunications industry was on AT&T Inc. early this month when the company announced a megadeal to buy BellSouth Corp. While the world was distracted, a bank in Central Pennsylvania un-

dered a big telecommunications deal of its own.

Atlantic Central Bankers Bank launched a new subsidiary that will provide telecommunications services to small community banks. ACBB is a little-known bank on the border between Camp Hill and Lemoyne in Cumberland County. It's an unknown quantity outside

of the banking world because it only uses are community banks. ACBB provides those banks with all sorts of pooled services to reduce costs. One executive likens ACBB to a farmer's market — it's owned by the participating banks.

In last year's a telecommunications system offered through a new subsidiary, ACBB-BITS. The

acronym stands for Banking Infrastructure & Technology Services. The new venture is an attempt to sale charge telecommunications costs by moving partly into the industry. BITS is taking on the dual roles of network manager and sales agent.

please see TELECOM, page 16

## LANCASTER COUNTY



From left: David Conklin, Rory Willing and Steve Young co-founded Web Xtreme Inc. The entrepreneurs dress casually and take breaks to shoot pool or play ping pong at their Lancaster County office.

## Lively, loose and lucrative

High-energy entrepreneurs use Web to build their way to success

BY ANGELA DODDY

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The work culture at Web Xtreme Inc. is reminiscent of the Silicon Valley dot-com companies that peaked in the late 1990s.

"Web Xtreme co-founders David Conklin,

Steve Young and Rory Willing are, respectively, 26, 29 and 36 years old, respectively.

The Lancaster County entrepreneurs like to dress informally and

down around when they're not conferring about new ways to

boost sales in their six online business ventures. Winding machines

in the hallway and ping pong machines in Web Xtreme's office are

commonplace. One day last week,

Conklin, co-founder, played a

prank on him by blocking his car in the parking lot.

At the same time, projects and work objectives

are set from the beginning, in which direction

the men are taking the business that way.

"We might put an (employee) on project one

day and take them off the next if we decided that

day to go on a different track," Willing said.

Web Xtreme's fast-paced, loosely creative at-

mosphere is typical at most technology firms,

and Pam Martin, director of Ben Franklin Tech-

nology Partners' South Central region.

What is not typical is the way the three men

eschewed the use of venture-capital funds

at most startup companies and

recorded an estimated \$2.3 million in sales in 2005, their

second year in business. In June, Web

Xtreme moved into a new, 25,000-

square-foot office in Gettysburg

Corporate Center in East Lan-

caster Township and today has

about 45 employees. Estimated

sales from the company's six online

businesses this year are expected to

total around \$9 million.

"They started with absolutely

nothing. Most people have to take

out another mortgage on their house or borrow

cash from their parents," Martin said. "We

don't see companies like this very often."

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## LUCRATIVE: Internet-firm owners call themselves 'silent killers'

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The bulk of the firm's revenue comes from its older and most profitable Web site, www.gettyhousevalues.com. In its first year, Getty House Values.com had more than 100,000 unique visitors and generated more than \$100,000 and more than 20 employees.

The men readily admit the concept for their initial Web site was taken from an older, highly successful e-commerce company called HouseValues Inc. based in Kutztown, Pa. That company first offered public stock options about a year ago and used its revenues to grow its business to 101 percent in 2005. Willing and Conklin took former real estate agents, received an ad from HouseValues Inc. and wondered why they couldn't do something similar in Central Pennsylvania. They teamed with Young, who had financial ex-

perience.

"We're not trying to reinvent the wheel here," Just said.

"There were a few links to work

"... I like that we have the ability to define ourselves now."

Rory Willing,  
 Web Xtreme Inc.

on our own. For instance, in the first days that Getty House Values.com was posted, they got contacts from homeowners around the country looking for agents in their area. The only problem was the three were unprepared to take to homeowners in Central Pennsylvania.

"We're not these leads were worth knowing to someone," Conklin said.

They eventually figured out the way to charge agents around the country for their contact information.

Today the three refer to themselves as "silent killers" because they operate under the radar, quietly making healthy revenue without much local public acknowledgment. About 90 percent of their profits are re-invested in the company.

In 2005, the company launched several new sites, including www.nationalagentdirectory.com, another site to help home-

owners quickly find agents in their area.

www.ipodguy.com, which provides digital mp3 and ZIP code databases to mortgage companies and other businesses across the U.S.

www.quickbysmash.com, which enables Lancaster County quick makers to sell their wares.

www.osculofoto.com, which is the top page. The site essentially will contain mainzmann news and information from blog-

online Web diaries and journals.

www.floorguide.com, a huge collection of articles for those browsing the Web for information.

Businesses can buy ads on the site.

The men have talked with Martin about the possibility of creating some venture-capital funds to further expand their business, but no definite plans have been made.

Conklin said he sometimes misses sitting at a settlement table with first-time homebuyers he helped. But at the same time, none of the three plan to return to their former job.

"We owe a lot to the real estate industry. But I like that we have the ability to diversify ourselves now."

This has so much more potential," Willing said. ■



From left: Rory Willing, David Conklin, and Steve Young co-founded Web Xtreme Inc. The firm recently moved into this new, 25,000-square-foot office in Gettysburg Corporate Center in East Lancaster Township.

## STATE

## Emissions standards for autos in limbo

BY DAVID DAGAN

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Within 10 years, local pass-delivery drivers, construction supervisors and other workers might be shouting about in "California cars."

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is moving ahead with efforts to make higher emissions standards mandatory for new cars starting in model year 2008. The standards would follow those used in California.

The Pennsylvania Legislature might still pass legislation to block the program. A Senate-passed bill that would make compliance voluntary is pending in a House committee.

As the issue matures, businesses are left to ponder how they would make out under the rules. Mike Doer is president of Wyr Services Inc., a company in Manheim Township, Lancaster

please see AUTOS, page 13

## REGION

## You go, girls!

## Tour-bus operator hopes women travelers fuel business

BY ANGELA DODDY

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An increasing number of women are traveling alone or with their sisters or girlfriends, making women-only excursions one of the fastest-growing segments in the travel industry, according to U.S. tour companies.

The growing number of women travelers has prompted the growth of nationally known firms such as Adventure/Woman and Gypsy Women Travel. Harrisburg-based Gettysburg-Tourism has not encountered the same popularity.

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