

# *The Valley Breeze &* **Observer**

1/30/2008

## **Lombardi emptying old Rizzo Ford buildings to stock town annex, garage**

By JOSEPH R. LaPLANTE, Valley Breeze & Observer Managing Editor

NORTH PROVIDENCE - Town crews are stripping the former Rizzo Ford complex, on the Notarantonio property, of ceilings, lights, glass partitions, fire alarm systems and sprinklers valued at more than \$100,000.

All those supplies plus other materials are headed for re-installation at the under-renovation Department of Public Works garage and the town annex that will soon be located in the restaurant that the town has purchased, next door to the Public Safety Complex on Mineral Spring Avenue.

“It has become a challenge, almost like a game to see how much we can get out of here,” Mayor Charles A. Lombardi told *The Breeze* on Thursday, Jan. 24 at the now closed dealership.

The wrecking ball looms for all the buildings on the block at Mineral Spring and Douglas avenues, to make way for a Lowe’s super store.

The grand prizes, however, are the heating and cooling systems that will be removed from the roof of the large dealership building, Lombardi said.

“(Chief of Staff) Dick (Fossa) and I were driving down Mineral Spring and I looked over and saw the heating and cooling units on the roof and I asked, ‘Hey, look at that, why can’t we get them?’” Lombardi said.

After phone calls to Lowe’s and representatives of the Notarantonio family, Lombardi was cleared “to take whatever we can use.”

The heating and cooling units will be installed at the public works garage, the mayor said, at a savings of thousands of dollars.

Another big ticket item are the two fire alarm systems. One will be installed at the garage and the other at the former Chinese restaurant, which the town is converting to a one-stop inspectional services division, as well as additional office space for the police and fire departments next door.

“Those cost \$10,000 each. We’re taking as much as we can take,” Fossa said. “We will use what we can use and save and store the rest of it for use later on.”

Lombardi said the opportunity to acquire everything from ceiling tiles and the hangers and grids that go with them, to fluorescent light units and large sodium lights from the service bays, to dozens of glass partitions that will be used to create offices, to water sprinkler heads and equipment is a businessman’s dream.

“We are very excited about what is going on here,” the mayor said while walking through the empty building and pointing out how thorough town workers have been. “When you come from the business sector and you have a vision of maximizing an opportunity without investing money. Why would anybody let this get by them?”

“We are addressing the waste that could have occurred and turned it into useful equipment and are saving tax dollars in the process.”

Some of the materials will end up in the town’s schools. Almost new partitions from a bathroom will be installed at the Whalen School, where bathrooms badly need updating, he said. Other items, like lights will be installed in Town Hall offices where lighting is inferior.

The goods are being carefully unfastened, unbolted, unscrewed from their fixtures and packed carefully into a large trailer loaned to the town by Marwell Trucking. The trailer was parked inside the service area. “I tell you, every time you take something, you see something else you can use,” Fossa said.

Two items in particular delight Lombardi and Fossa: a large round chrome mirror and an extension ladder.

The mirror was used at the dealership to give drivers a view around an obstruction when they exited one area. Lombardi and Fossa plan to install the mirror on a telephone pole beside the Town Hall driveway that exits onto Smith Street to help see pedestrians on the sidewalk who are obstructed from view by a neighboring building.

Lombardi laughs about the ladder.

“There is this small door opening in the wall and one of our guys opens it up, looks in and sees a brand new extension ladder,” the mayor said. “Apparently, the contractor figured it was easier to leave the ladder inside this wall than take the wall out to get the ladder. We smashed the wall and took the ladder out.”