

# Locally owned business grows despite economy!

Don Diebolt is the traditional sort. Works hard. Values family. Keeps his word.

Those same traits have paid off in business as well. Diebolt's reputation as a reliable provider of building materials and service make him the top retailer in the area.

Promoting that good reputation has helped push Diebolt's sales through the roof. Year-to-date sales are 45% over those of 2008.

Diebolt credits two things for the success. He has more than doubled his sales staff and a catchy advertising circular designed by the Iola Register and inserted in more than 20 area publications has attracted contractors in a three-state area.

"Advertising doesn't cost, it pays," he said of the 116,000 circulars that tout Diebolt's business.

The far reach of the circulars throughout southeast Kansas newspapers and shoppers sparked interest in regional contractors. Having a bigger sales staff has helped connect those contractors to Diebolt's materials and expertise at competitive prices.

"You can't wait for business to walk in the door," he said. "You have to go out and get it."

**THE OUTREACH** to contractors has resulted in an increase in residential construction-related business for Diebolt. Diebolt Lumber is also benefiting from the fact the region has not been overdeveloped in recent years unlike metropolitan areas with speculative housing developments.

Business is steady primarily to the south of Iola, Diebolt said, including the communities of Humboldt, Coffeyville, Cherryvale,

Parsons and Independence in Kansas and as far over as Bartlesville, Okla. and Butler, Mo.

"We've been quoting and closing on a lot of homes in these towns," he said. Most are custom-built residential homes, he said, that use package floor plans found on the Diebolt Web site, dieboltlumber.com. Storage buildings are also in high demand.

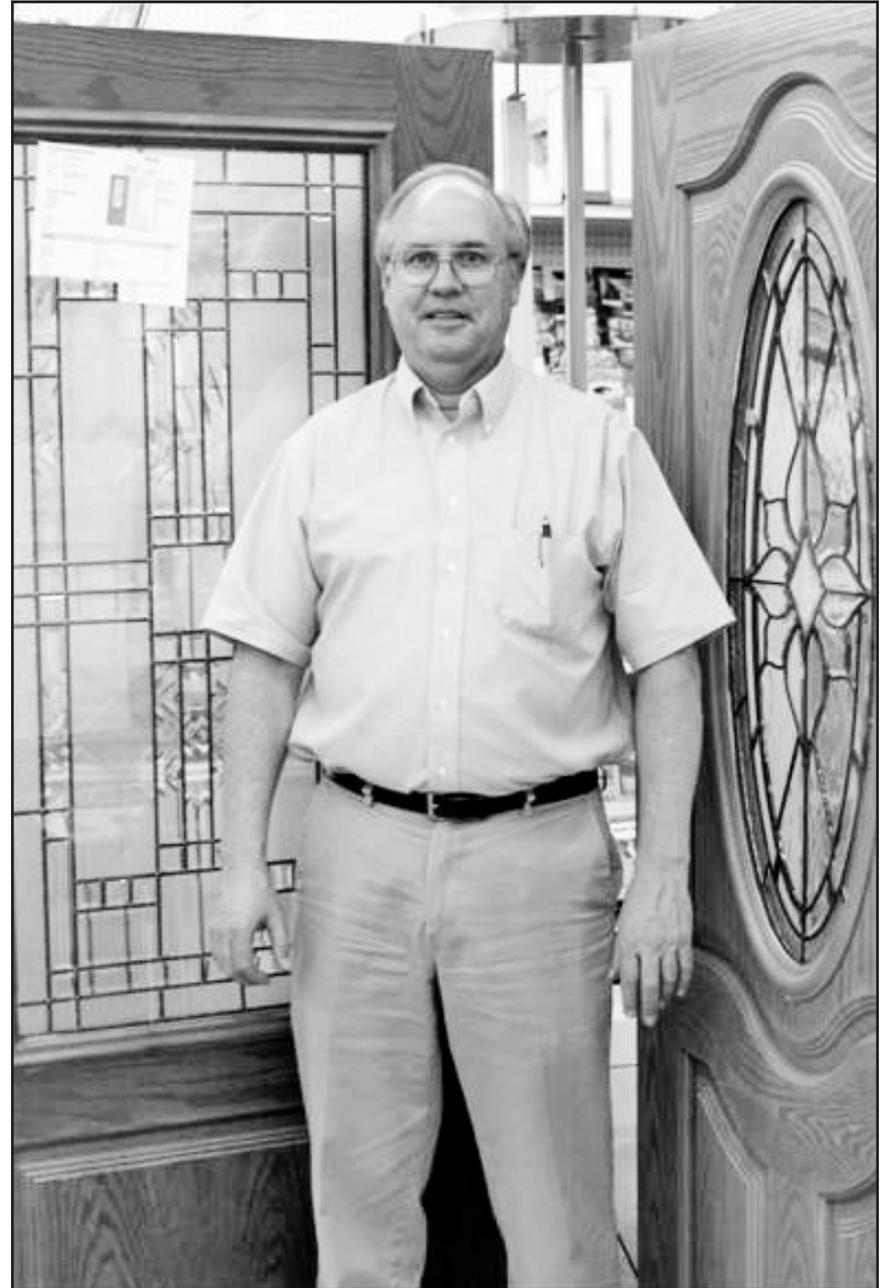
The success of the spring sale was so good — more than double against 2008's spring sale — that Diebolt is planning a mid-summer sale. He plans to cut prices on bath units, home packages, laminate flooring, storm doors, barbed wire, shingles and premium kitchen packages that include "all the bells and whistles" of cabinet, counter-top and sink options at no extra charge.

The most popular floor plans are for a 1,360-square-foot home with three bedrooms, two baths, he said. Purchasing the plans direct eliminate the need for an architect. "We can supply all the materials and set you up with a contractor," he said.

An uptick in home improvement items such as new windows, doors and floors is due to people being more in tune to energy efficiencies plus a desire to keep a modern look, said Art Chapman, store manager.

**DIEBOLT** knows he has a good thing going at Diebolt Lumber.

A longtime sales staff has built up the experience and expertise needed to beat out any competition. "For instance, if you don't know anything about doors and windows — how they are hung, the differences in insulation, the options in hardware — then you're only doing half the job for your customer."



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