

## **ASBURY PARK PRESS on November 26, 2000**

**Still, we're a large company with family values. We offer something that megastores don't- you can come in any time and talk to management.**

**"Barry Fisher (Owner, Ace Aluminum)"**

**By Gretchen Schmidhausler/Correspondent**

**One of the keys to a successful business is the ability to change with the times, according to home improvement entrepreneur Barry Fisher.**

**But Fisher, President of Ace Aluminum Products in Freehold, readily admits that philosophy doesn't quite jibe with his company's name.**

**"We really should be called Ace Vinyl," he joked, considering all the vinyl siding and windows his company installs. But he would be loath to change the name of the nearly 48-year old company started by his father.**

**In 1953, egg farmer Gustave Fisher began going door to door in the rural parts of the Freehold area selling his neighbors new windows and doors. He managed to supplement his income nicely until the building boom that started Monmouth and Ocean counties in the 1960s placed him in the right place at the right time.**

**The elder Fisher, together with two relatives, found a niche selling aluminum doors, windows and other products to builders.**

**"They were successful from the beginning. They even manufactured their own porch enclosures and awnings," said Barry Fisher, 56, of Marlboro.**

**Eventually, the other partners left the business. When Gustave retired in the mid-1970s, his son took over the helm, Barry Fisher's son, 27-year old David, a certified public accountant from Manalapan, joined the business in January. Barry's wife, Rose, also is involved on a limited basis.**

**Ace Aluminum has about 25 employees, including office personnel, salespeople and installers. The company is located on South Street in Freehold. Ace moved to its current building after a devastating fire in 1963 destroyed the old building, which was near the current location. Although all the inventory was lost in the disaster, the company bounced back quickly thanks to the building boom, Fisher said.**

**The fire also gave the owners the opportunity to re-evaluate their product line. Eventually, vinyl siding replaced aluminum, and more energy efficient products were added to the stable of goods.**

**Also, the variety of available styles and colors has blossomed. For homeowners overwhelmed by the choices, Ace can provide customers with computer-generated pictures to give them an idea what their refurbished home will look like.**

**Aside from updating its product line to change with the times, Ace has managed to survive the influx of home improvement superstores.**

**"This business was founded on service. We use our own men for installations. Because we're so busy, sometimes there's a wait. Most of our customers are patient. They feel it's worth the wait," Fisher said.**

**A solid reputation and customer referrals have helped Ace develop a tremendous customer base, fisher said. It's not uncommon for the company to serve third-generation customers.**

**David fisher said a diverse product line has also helped. In addition to siding, windows and doors, Ace sells trims, garage doors, porch overhangs and even carries its own line of doors. Competitive pricing is also a factor, they said.**

**Keeping up with a changing customer base is also important. At one time, Ace Aluminum's customer base was made up of 80 percent new homes. Today, 85 percent of the business involves older home.**

**Although the new construction boom is over for Ace, the company finds itself benefiting from the large number of homeowners willing to spend money upgrading their existing homes. "We were one of the lucky ones who were able to change with the times," Fisher said. "Still, we're a large company with family values. We offer something that the megastores don't – you can come in any time and talk to management."**

**As much as the Fishers love their Freehold location and the community, they realize they have outgrown their current facility. Barry Fisher said he would like to move to a larger building somewhere in the vicinity in the near future.**