

Clearly a winner: Alton's Lyons Glass is business of month

May 12, 2009

By FRED POLLARD

The Telegraph

ALTON - Sometimes the "pane" of keeping a business running smoothly does get the recognition it deserves.

Lyons Glass, celebrating 80 years in business, has been chosen as the River Bend Growth Association Business of the Month for May.

"(The River Bend Growth Association) is a good organization," owner Perry Hill said. "It is good for the local economy and good for local businesses."

Perry's wife and co-owner Jeanne Hill said the success of the company is built on a solid foundation of experience and quality.

"The loyalty and camaraderie of our employees, along with exemplary service and advice from local professionals and customer loyalty, has enabled us to endure and persevere through some disappointments that could have set us back," Jeanne Hill said. "We are thankful to be in this business, employing others and serving customers."

Original owner Jim Lyons opened the doors to the business at Fourth and Piasa in Alton in 1929. Perry Hill, who started working for Lyons in 1972 at the age of 15, bought the glass shop in 1982. Ushering in a new era, Hill went to work updating the company inside and out. The office area was enclosed and separated from the work area, the interior and exterior of the building was painted, and awnings and black top were added. In 2008, the front office and reception area was enlarged and extensively remodeled.

Today, the Hills keep daily operations running, along with shop manager Dick Lyons and company Vice President Steve Hill, who has been with the company for more than 20 years.

While Lyons Glass has built a reputation on quality home glass installation and windshield replacement, the company also offers screens, tabletops, mirrors, plate glass, insulated glass, residential and commercial projects, and windshield repair. Perry Hill said remodeling jobs have increased, and custom shower doors are popular items.

"We have extensive experience in customizing our products to fulfill our customer needs and desires," Jeanne Hill said. "Some examples are custom shower enclosures, custom screen rooms and customized storefront enclosures. Unlike many other glass shops, we will fabricate and install a customer's own used glass when possible to help keep their costs down instead of mandating they only have the option of purchasing new products."

Although used glass is not guaranteed, Perry Hill said his company will install it when it can to help save money for loyal customers.

Lyons Glass has been an area mainstay for 80 years and continues to build a solid foundation on loyalty, quality and customer service.

"If you want to last in this business, you have to treat people right," Perry said. "We really have no plans to change anything in the near future. Everything is running smooth. If it's not broke, don't fix it."

It is clear that Lyons plans to continue providing the community with a valuable service for many years to come.

"As the only locally owned and operated full-service glass shop in Alton, Lyons is pleased to offer service to the entire Metro East region as well as St. Louis," Jeanne Hill said. "(Our) mission to provide quality products and service at reasonable prices in a timely manner has been a constant for 80 years."

Lyons Glass, 2800 Belle St., is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. For information call (618) 462-2731.

fred_pollard@thetelegraph.com