

People

Inman focuses on writing in PR venture

By Bruce Meyer

Rubber & Plastics News Staff

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio—Hank Inman wasn't one of those people who had trouble deciding on a career.

"I'm one of those fortunate few who knew a long time ago what they wanted to do, and that's write," said Inman, a retired Goodyear public relations official who now runs his own one-person PR firm, Goldfinch Communications Inc., out of his Cuyahoga Falls home.

Inman's career spans more than 30 years, all of them in journalism-related activities. After college he was a military journalist with the U.S. Navy's Sea Bee's construction group. He then worked for a newspaper in Oklahoma before joining Goodyear's PR staff in Akron in 1978. There he worked in varied posts in the department, including doing communications work for engineered products, the tire division, publications, labor relations and several special assignment stints for such projects as Total Quality Management.

After taking early retirement from Goodyear in 2001, he worked for 15 months at a marketing agency in Akron before falling victim to a declining market. At that point, he decided to go out on his own and in 2002 formed his own firm, which launched its Web site at www.goldfinchcommunications.com in early January.

While some who start their own ven-

tures want to start small and grow quickly, Inman has no plans to be anything but a one-man show. "I really want to keep it that way," he said. "I have no visions of grandeur. I like it the way I've got it. It gives me the flexibility to write, and I love my commute from the bedroom to the basement."

Inman has a couple clients of his own and does a lot of freelance writing for other organizations, providing a wide base of topics. For example, he provides PR services for ContiTech Transmission Products, North America, working with Marketing Director Roger Homer, whom Inman knew when both were at Goodyear. He writes on automotive-related topics for Pinnacle Communication Group Inc. and for Myers Industries Inc.'s internal publications. He also works with several ad agencies to provide PR services when needed.

"What's nice is I do a lot of writing on a great variety of subjects," said Inman, who particularly likes feature writing. "I can write on an automotive component one day and the next day be writing about a Microsoft project."

Inman also has carved out a niche as a consultant in matching up companies



RPN photo by Bruce Meyer

Hank Inman's Goldfinch Communications Inc. is a one-person public relations firm.

seeking advertising and marketing services with the agency that can best suit their needs.

By being his own boss, he can pursue other projects, including a book he's researching that will focus on the personalities behind the blimps. "I don't make a ton of money," Inman said. "I probably make one-third of what I made at Goodyear.

What I like is the freedom of movement."

That allows him to do a lot of volunteer work. He has worked in the press box at Walsh University football games for the past 10 years; he works Friday nights in the press box at Hoban High School football games; and he now is the scorekeeper for Hoban basketball games—all activities that are a throwback to his sports writing days in Oklahoma.

Inman also plays lead guitar in Retrospect, a classic rock band that plays gigs in the Akron/Canton area of Ohio. "I've been in a band since I was in college," he said, noting that the Beatles are his favorite band and Eric Clapton his favorite performer.

It's clear the former Goodyear official doesn't miss the corporate rat race. "Goodyear was good to me and it was a great experience," he said. "It gave me a different outlook on the way life really works from a corporate standpoint, and the way the country works, being driven by big companies. I met a lot of great people, and I still keep in contact with a lot of them."

For those who may want to pursue life as a freelance writer, Inman has this advice: "You've got to find a niche and pursue that. Your expectations have to be such that you know you're not going to make a lot of money at it. Thank goodness I've got a loving and understanding wife, and she's been supportive of this all the way."