



Gallery of Shops

LES AND MARY SIELER
PROVIDE SPACE IN
DOWNTOWN ADRIAN FOR
ENTREPRENEURS TO
TEST AND GROW IDEAS

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,
Storyville Social, as part of the
Michigan Main Street Story
Series

Les has been running Sieler Water Systems, located down the hall, for 29 years. The Gallery of Shops building itself was originally owned by three brothers who unfortunately all passed away, leaving behind one wife who resided in California. The building's condition began to deteriorate.

One day someone was walking through the building who was interested in buying it. The realtor came to us and said, 'They dropped the price again, so if you're interested, you should jump on it now.' So we talked. We had just put a lot of money into remodeling our office and didn't want to be at the mercy of a landlord dictating rent and space.

Why deal with all that, when we can dictate our own destiny?

We hadn't thought about purchasing the building before that point, but we purchased the building anyway. That was eight years ago. The first step was to take care of our tenants by repairing everything that was broken, so we got a big board, invited our tenants to a meeting and had them list everything that needed to be fixed. At that time, we had ten open spaces, so we discussed being a single team, sharing ideas about marketing, and moving forward in one direction.

We felt pretty good about it, and others must have too—we are at full capacity now. We've done so many repairs and renovations, including our solar panel roof that covers nearly the entirety of our electrical needs.

We see ourselves as more than just a building; we see ourselves as a starter/incubator for businesses. We have small suites that work well for businesses just starting out or taking the next step towards growth, and they're doing great. Our tenant agreement is a fixed rate so they know what their overhead is and what their expenses are; they pay rent, and we cover heat and electricity, garbage, snow removal, etc. Not only are the tenants happy because the landlord is here in the building if they have an issue, but many of them also come to us for advice.

We love Adrian, so we do whatever we can to help the revitalization efforts that are happening here."

-Les and Mary Sieler of the Gallery of Shops, Adrian, Michigan

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