



# Columbus Square Herald

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## Developer buys hybrid to help economy, encourages others to do their part, too.

**George Hadler,**  
President, The Hadler Companies

Like everybody these days, I follow the daily economic news with a sense of anxiety and cautious optimism. While many real estate development firms are taking a pounding, the Hadler Companies is standing solid due to conservative management and avoidance of risky new developments. As you know, we have spent the past three years reinvesting aggressively in Columbus Square, and it is paying off handsomely for us. We are still in the enviable position of remaining profitable in this economy.

This is a unique period in U.S. history, with seemingly more ugly news coming forward every day. The credit crisis is international in scope, and without government assistance, many, many major banks would be bankrupt. It seems nearly every employer is laying off people, so the government is embarking on a huge stimulus package to try to improve the situation in the hope jobs can be saved.

As Americans, the government is also asking us, at least those of us who can afford it, to also spend money to stimulate the economy. With the auto industry's woes leading the national

headlines, and General Motors sales down 53 percent from last year, I wondered if maybe I should buy a new car.

As I pondered this thought, I had a flashback to the late 1970s when Chrysler needed a similar federal bailout. My Dad, the late William H. Hadler, bought a Chrysler for the first time in 1979. He needed a new car for his house in Florida, so he bought a Chrysler simply because the company was facing bankruptcy. I remembered thinking this was one of the most American things a person of his means could have done to help. It was a conscious effort to help a major auto company and the economy when the chips were down.

I don't really need a new car because mine is only three years old and still has low mileage. So, I put the thought aside. A few days later, I happened to see an infomercial for the new GMC Yukon Hybrid, and was impressed with the average 20 mpg for a full-sized SUV, comparable to a Toyota Camry.

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The more I thought about it, I liked the idea of an eco-friendly vehicle that could be used to comfortably show properties to prospective tenants that could also haul cargo. I asked our company controller how much the company was spending to reimburse mileage for employees using their personal vehicles, and the answer was a quite substantial sum in 2008. I realized that we could save money by allowing employees to use it for company business, and would lessen the wear and tear on their personal vehicles, providing a tangible benefit for them - The classic win-win situation.

As you know, I have worked very closely with leaders in the Northland area, including Greg Gerhard, owner of Bob Daniels Buick-GMC-Pontiac, who succeeded me as president of the Northland Business Association. He and his wife are also neighbors of mine. To make a long story short, if I was going to buy a Yukon Hybrid, it would be through him as a special effort to "Shop Northland" whenever we have the choice. So my son and I decided to take a test drive.

We were very impressed with the car, and Greg offered such a great deal, we decided to buy it on the spot. One of the things we liked about the car was the bold striping that clearly identifies the vehicle as a hybrid. We have since placed the Hadler Companies logo on it for advertising value. We want to build on our reputation as a progressive company, one that shares concern for the future of our environment.

Now, here's an unexpected side benefit that made us feel especially good about our purchase. Greg later shared with me that this last-minute end-of-the-month sale allowed his dealership to qualify for a quarterly sales incentive program from GMC. He also said that hybrids aren't selling well due to lower gas prices, so he was particularly pleased to sell the fully loaded Yukon hybrid.

This all began with a single noble thought, to help General Motors and the environment, but in the process, it became a no-brainer for us. We feel that those of us who continue to prosper should participate in stimulating the economy now, when the country truly needs our individual support.

Actually, I don't intend this story to be self-serving. My real intention is to offer an example of what we as Americans can do to help, if we can. There has probably never been a better time to buy things. Bargain prices for goods and services are everywhere, and you can often negotiate prices even lower. And if possible, as a merchant you should make sure you have some real bargains to offer as well.

This is something you can share with your customers. People need a positive reason to spend at a time when our instincts are to hoard cash. We're sharing our story in the hopes that people will think about how we decided to do what we have done. You

might even say we talked ourselves into it – but we also found a way to justify the purchase as a prudent business decision. All it took was a little extra thought, and we got a great deal.

If others follow our example, it can only help at a time when most of us feel helpless, and have to trust Washington is doing the right thing by taking on debt to stimulate the economy. There's also another benefit from your sharing this story. As a company, we've evolved to become a more responsive organization to serve both the needs of our tenants and the shoppers who patronize Columbus Square.

We realize we're a big part of the community, and we want to do everything we can to promote Columbus Square as a center that actually "cares" about what's going on around us. If more people make a conscious effort to shop at Columbus Square, the only local center that is actually "giving something back," we will all prosper for many years. We hope this is also one of the benefits of being one of our valued tenants. If you help promote the center's efforts to improve the community, it is also a positive reflection for your business too.



## Columbus Square Bowling Palace hosts state tournament

Columbus Square Bowling Palace is currently hosting the men's UBCS Ohio State Championship Tournament.

The tournament began Feb. 14 and runs every weekend through May 10th, except Easter weekend. This year's event has 1,407 five-man teams coming to Columbus from throughout Ohio. The Palace hosts the doubles and singles portion, with Eastland Lanes hosting the team event. The last time this event came to Columbus was in 2002. It is a welcome visitor as it generates a lot of revenue for the surrounding restaurants, hotels, and area shopping centers.

The event is open to the public. Squad times at the Palace are Saturday, Noon and 5 p.m. and Sunday, 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. All 64 lanes are used for the squads until the tournament ends. Open bowling will not be available until 9 p.m. on weekend nights.

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