



Business

Friday, Aug. 1, 2008

The News-Herald ■ News-Herald.com



Maribeth Joeright/MJoeright@News-Herald.com

Dr. Jeffrey Gross moved his dental practice, Healthy Smile Dental Care Center, into what used to be a bank building. He even helped design the new space.

Banking on his instincts

Dentist sticks with his own ideas to convert a bank building into a new office for his practice

Brandon C. Baker
BBaker@News-Herald.com

Details

For more information on Dr. Jeffrey Gross, call (440) 951-7856 or visit www.jeffreygrossdds.com.

Dr. Jeffrey Gross knew exactly what he wanted in his new facility without spending one day in architecture.

While a dental supply company and contractor executed the plan into the new, spacious Healthy Smile Dental Care Center in Eastlake, Gross relied on his 30-plus years of experience to craft his vision.

Had the relocation taken place earlier in his career, Gross may have accepted every idea a supply company would have given him. Now, though, Gross knew he needed maximum input to fully satisfy his familiar clientele.

"It was real unusual to do it that way," Gross said of a dentist having as much design input as he did, "but I'm a real hands-on guy and kind of a feely, touchy guy, which a lot of dentists are."

"If you leave yourself to the whims of the manufacturers, you may not get what you want."

With a new 5,000-square-foot office across the street from his older, smaller one, Gross did not have to worry about such a problem. The office, at 34586 Lake Shore Blvd., contains a composite of basic treatment rooms for checkups and cleanings and larger stations for specialty and surgical pro-

cedures.

However, Gross is cautious when labeling the basic areas as rooms. That's because they all combine to form one airy 28-by-11 area, with each station separated only by sleek and narrow cabinets containing dental supplies instead of walls.

"By utilizing the cabinets as walls, you attain a level of privacy, but at the same time, it's wide open space," said Gross, who has nearly 10,000 patients on record. "You can see around you, but you really can't see the next person."

"Too many dental treatment rooms are just claustrophobic," he said. "The biggest impediment to patients getting treated is fear. It's not money."

Gross' office had been saving its own money for about three or four years in preparation of the move. It cost about \$250,000 to gut and redesign the former Sky Bank location. Gross said the office did not go in debt to make the move happen.

After a lengthy city ordinance adjusting the process to transform the bank into a dental office, Eastlake Mayor Ted Andrzejewski is thrilled with the outcome.

"We saw an opportunity to take a building that was vacant for several years and put in a good business that might be there for the next 25 to 30 years, maybe forever," Andrzejewski said. "We were glad to do that."

The Tuscan-inspired office also features a lobby with a high-definition television and free Wi-Fi Web access. Those features should come in use for the patients Gross says travel from as far away as Akron and some neighboring states to receive care.

The office's other main component should take shape by 2009 — a dental teaching facility fit for about 40 post-graduates.

Gross said maintaining his office's Eastlake roots was a major reason for moving his office into a former bank so close to his original location. Still, a vault remains as the dental care center's sole banking characteristic.

"We tried to find people who would maybe try to take it for scrap metal, but nobody wanted it," said Gross, who balked at a \$95,000 quote to remove the vault.

"We opened the door and we buried it in the wall, so therefore, nobody could get locked in the safe."