



Tolson Enterprises  
Harvey Tolson  
Northwest Ohio

What began as insurance for a rainy day has blossomed into one of the most successful real estate development and property management firms in Northwest Ohio. Harvey Tolson, owner of Tolson Enterprises, tells the story.

“My career started in manufacturing,” Harvey said. “When I was in my early twenties, I wanted to create an alternative source of income, so I began to invest in commercial real estate. The manufacturing business was good, but very competitive, and I wasn’t sure how long it might last. So over the years, I started to acquire a few properties such as shopping centers, medical buildings and office complexes, and self-storage facilities that I could manage.”

Today Harvey Tolson owns, operates, and manages 44 large commercial properties with a portfolio totaling in excess of \$80 million throughout the management hub of Tolson Enterprises with a well-trained professional staff of 30 employees. The firm also has been successful in planning and building new shopping centers and self-storage facilities in Northwest Ohio and Southern Michigan. In the past two years, Tolson Enterprises formed Tolson/Kelley Builders, building 10 private residential homes in the year 2000 and 20 in the year 2001. The firm’s expertise in evaluating and operating commercial properties is so well respected that local realtors and banks often approach the firm with promising new properties that fit its investment criteria.

That was the case regarding the firm’s largest acquisition—an office building, warehouse and distribution center in Arrowhead Park in Maumee, Ohio that includes three buildings on 30 acres with more than 500,000 square feet of space. This purchase is the largest acquisition by a single individual in the history of Lucas County.

Part of the reason for Tolson Enterprises’ success has been the responsiveness of its staff and its ability to serve the needs of its tenants. “There are rewards for doing a good job,” Mr. Tolson said. “If a tenant calls and says there is a problem, we take care of it immediately. That helps keep our occupancy rates high and enables us to sell properties faster and at a higher price when the time is right.”

Mr. Tolson has found Phil Johnson of Savage & Associates, Inc. to be a valuable resource in providing employee benefits such as health, optical, and dental insurance, and retirement planning for Tolson Enterprises’ employees. Phil also assists Mr. Tolson with estate planning and provides personal insurance for Mr. Tolson and his family.

“I’ve known Phil since he was a kid,” Mr. Tolson said. “I met Phil through his father, Paul Johnson, who was a distinguished insurance man here locally before he died. Working with Phil has been a wonderful experience. He is knowledgeable, addresses our needs, and gets the job done. Phil says I’m demanding in the sense that when I have an appointment, I expect that person to come prepared for the meeting. When I leave a meeting with Phil, I know that I’ve made some progress.”

