

## Information Center

*The Edward Lowe Foundation's Information Center houses a historical exhibit of Ed Lowe's business ventures, entrepreneurship initiatives and involvement in the Cass County community. The center is open to the public on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except holidays) and is located at 58220 Decatur Road in Cassopolis, Michigan. For more information, call 800-232-5693.*

### Launching a new industry

Before Ed Lowe introduced Kitty Litter in 1947, cat owners used ashes or sand in litter boxes. A cleaner and more efficient alternative, clay-based Kitty Litter sparked a brand new industry, and today cat box filler generates about \$2 billion in annual sales in the United States.

Early on, Lowe experimented with other pet products, ranging from cat toys to franchised pet stores. Yet he discovered that his real niche was the mineral business. By focusing on cat box filler and other clay-based products, Lowe built a company that generated \$165 million in annual revenue before its sale in 1990.



### Entrepreneurial mindset

“Ed was always thinking, always questioning,” says Dan Wyant, the foundation's president and chief operating officer. “He had an inherent ability to create a process on the spot or improve a product.”

Reflecting this penchant for innovation, Lowe secured 32 patents, 115 trademarks and 36 copyrights. Many of these were unrelated to the cat box filler business, such as packaged fire wood and a method for disseminating data about violent storms.

Lowe was also known as a savvy marketer. The Information Center features advertisements, packaging and product displays dating back to the 1940s — many that were cutting-edge for their time.



### Supporting second-stagers

In 1985 Ed and Darlene Lowe created the Edward Lowe Foundation to provide greater support and resources for entrepreneurs and entrepreneur support organizations.

The foundation conducts research, recognition and educational programs, with a focus on second-stage companies (those beyond the startup phase striving for significant, steady growth). Among key programs are:

- Retreats that help business leaders learn new tools and gain insights to accelerate growth.
- PeerSpectives, a unique CEO roundtable system.
- The System for Integrated Growth, a virtual program that provides access to a SWAT team of business experts to help address issues impacting growth.



### BRV: a learning laboratory

Lowe had a flair for finding valuable property — and improving it. Among the 11,238 acres he purchased was Big Rock Valley, which today serves as headquarters for the foundation.

Big Rock Valley comprises 2,000 acres of woodland, farmland, prairie and wetland. Its diverse landscapes and ecosystems attract a wide variety of animals, plants and insects. Many of these are listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern, such as the eastern box turtle, massasauga rattlesnake, cerulean warbler and cut-leaved water parsnip.

Displays at the Information Center highlight some of the research and land management practices conducted at Big Rock Valley, such as managing for old-growth woodlands and prescribed burning.

