

THE INSIDER

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Boobie becomes franchise player for Robek's franchisee

You could say Jerry Luce hit the marketing lottery.

Mr. Luce last year opened in North Olmsted a Robek's franchise — the chain sells fruit smoothie-style drinks and offers a healthy-eating menu. To help promote his second Robek's in Warrensville Heights, Mr. Luce in early May signed a couple Cleveland Cavaliers to give autographs at its June 23 grand opening.

Mr. Luce has hired other local sports figures for occasional appearances. Among them are the Browns' Joshua Cribbs and Indians pitcher Jake Westbrook.

This time around, though, Mr. Luce unexpectedly scored a promotional coup: Along with rookie Shannon Brown, he signed Brown's fellow first-year Cavalier teammate Daniel "Boobie" Gibson to help christen his new store. Not long thereafter, Gibson's postseason play, particularly in the Eastern Conference Finals, turned him in to a high-profile fan favorite.

Bet Mr. Luce can expect a run on smoothies that day. — **John Booth**

They're practiced at this practice area

The government and economic development chops of Greg Huth and Rob Zimmerman are coming in handy at Cleveland law firm Kahn Kleinman LPA.

The firm has started a public law and economic development practice group in which Mr. Zimmerman, a member of Shaker Heights City Council, will serve as chairman, and Mr. Huth, former director of economic development for the city of Cleveland, will be vice chairman. The new practice group, with eight lawyers under its umbrella, will focus partly on helping clients secure financing arrangements from government bodies.

"We recognized that government was a player in so much of what we were doing," Mr. Zimmerman said. "We really need to better understand these programs, which I think we do. We need to help government help our clients."

Messrs. Zimmerman and Huth say they believe their experience outside the courtroom makes them uniquely suited for this type of work.

"We've got very good relationships with elected officials on both sides of the aisle," Mr.

Zimmerman said. — **Shawn A. Turner**

Lube Stop greases the skids for hybrid vehicles

There's something about an oil company's promotion of hybrid autos that seems an odd blend, but The Lube Stop Inc. in Berea is doing just that.

Last week, the quick oil change company, with 37 locations in Northeast Ohio, announced it's offering 15% discounts on products and services for hybrid electric vehicles, including the Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid and Ford Escape Hybrid.

The local promotion is in response to falling sales of hybrids nationwide that the company pins, in part, on the expiration of consumer tax credits on the vehicles.

"The goal of this program is to help drive higher adoption of hybrid vehicles in Northeast Ohio," said Tom Morley, Lube Stop president. "If other dealerships, quick oil change shops and full service garages in the region follow this lead, more Northeast Ohioans many consider purchasing hybrid vehicles, and that would be a positive change." — *David Bennett*

Pull out your iPod and dig that lecture

Kent State University has inked a deal with Apple Inc.'s iTunes to provide free digital audio and video programming to students and the general public.

Starting next fall, students will be able to access items such as lectures and digital course materials while the general public will gain access to non-copyrighted programs such as university speeches and events. The digital programs will be offered through iTunesU, Apple's digital music and movie service. Participation by faculty members is optional.

"This project will offer the Kent State community a valuable resource," said Ed Mahon, Kent State's vice president for information services and chief information officer. "Kent State's iTunesU is not meant to replace the classroom experience, but to provide new and innovative learning opportunities that allow students and faculty to remain actively engaged in the learning process, no matter what time it is or where they are in the world."

Kent State joins schools such as Stanford University, the University of California-Berkeley and the University of Michigan in offering this service. — **Shannon Mortland**

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