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Cheers

After opening his first sushi restaurant in 2008, **Eric Heckman** hoped to break \$1 million in sales within three years. He topped that his first full year with Tani Sushi Bistro in Clayton. Last year, Tani posted \$1.5 million in sales, thanks in part to the launch of

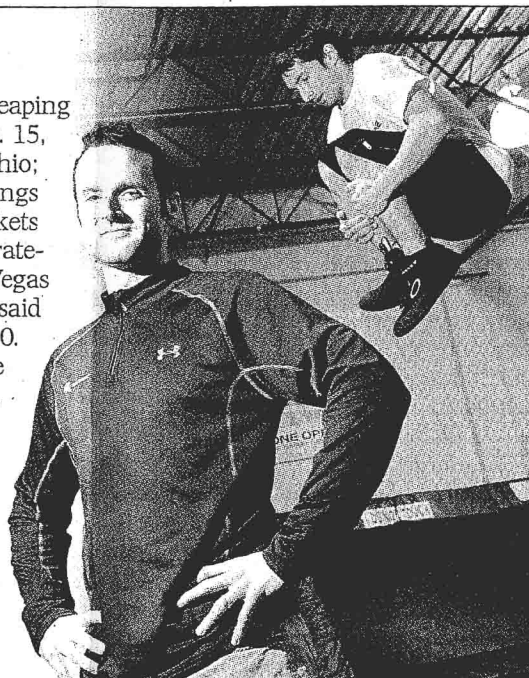
Area 14, which is adjacent to Tani at 14 S. Bemiston and pairs a cocktail lounge with the sushi. Heckman is adding a covered patio and additional seating.

Learning at home

Elizabeth Freeman achieved sales of \$41,000 in the first 10 months at her Tutor Doctor franchise in Chesterfield on an initial investment of \$45,000 plus \$20,000 in operating cash, and expects to double revenue this year. Freeman and her husband, **Doug Freeman**, senior director at Furniture Brands, funded it with retirement funds. It provides in-home teaching for students ranging from pre-schoolers to senior citizens and special needs to gifted students, with 30 tutors for about 50 students.

Jumping out

Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park is leaping into franchise operations. Since Sept. 15, it has launched sites in Columbus, Ohio; Boston; and Minneapolis, with openings in the Orlando and Los Angeles markets on the way to complement corporate-owned locations in Chesterfield, Las Vegas and Sacramento. President **Jeff Platt** said revenue reached \$3.2 million in 2010. This year he is targeting 10 franchise deals and revenue of \$3.75 million, including \$50,000 franchise fees and royalties of 6 percent of gross sales. Sky Zone added a franchise training facility at its Chesterfield headquarters. VP **Barclay Poole** (pictured in foreground) runs Sky Zone's marketing and oversees corporate locations from St. Louis.



BRIAN CASSIDY

Two in one

Midland States Bank already had a branch in Chesterfield when it bought the failed Westbridge Bank & Trust. In fact, it was right across the street. So it's combining the two at the Midland branch at 17107 Chesterfield Airport Road, resulting in a 70 percent cost reduction, said **Leon Holschbach**, president and chief executive. Midland, based in Effingham, Ill., has \$1.7

billion in total assets, including more than \$300 million in the St. Louis market, which is led by **Tom Flores**.

A bigger Pi

Chris Sommers is scouting locations in downtown St. Louis for his sixth company-owned Pi Pizzeria location. One con-

tender is the Old Post Office, in space formerly occupied by Pasta House. **Mark Brennan** of Solon Gershman is working with Sommers to find a location, which would likely open this summer. Pi's Washington, D.C., restaurant will open in April or May and be the biggest so far with 200 seats. Pi had about \$10 million in revenue in 2010.

Banking moves

Fred Dyer is wearing two hats these days at Midwest BankCentre, with almost \$1.1 billion in assets. In addition to commercial banking, Dyer is heading the bank's West County division, covering Chesterfield and St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren counties. **Dan Berra** had been West County president but left to join the St. Louis office of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, where he will be senior vice president and commercial specialist.

Employee friendly

Brown Smith Wallace is the only St. Louis firm on Accounting Today's 2010 list of the 100 Best Accounting Firms to Work For. It also made the cut in 2008. The firm, with \$30 million in annual revenue, is led by **Harvey Wallace** and **Jeffrey Smith**.