

## NEW VENTURES

# Online fish farmer locates firm in downtown Allentown



By STACY WESCOE  
Business Journal  
Staff

Many people dream of turning their hobby into their profession, but it's rarely an easy task. It was even more so for Billy Simmons, a 30-year old Allentown man with developmental disabilities who was working at the Allentown Federal Courthouse through VIA of the Lehigh Valley.

But his love of tropical fish led him to a career as a soon-to-be self-employed fish farmer thanks to grants VIA was able to obtain for him through the National Institute for the Severely Handicapped.

Raegan Owens, Simmons' VIA customized employment coordinator, also helped to obtain additional grant money and support for the business from the Customized Employment pilot program funded by a grant from Lehigh County, the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs and the Via Foundation.

Now with help from Owens and additional support from Bob Raidline of Lehigh Valley Aquatium Maintenance, Simmons is getting ready to open Billy's Tropical Fish Farm, where he plans to sell exotic tropical fish online.

Simmons, who has two fish tanks of his own, admitted being in the fish breeding business is very new to him, but emphasized he's confident that with the support



Photo by Stacy Wescoe

**Billy Simmons sets a fish up to be photographed in his fish staging tank for later sale on the Internet on the Web site at [www.billystropicalfish.com](http://www.billystropicalfish.com).**

he's gotten from VIA and his friend, Raidline, he will succeed.

"I want to make a lot of money," he said with a huge grin.

But Simmons and his support team are playing it smart — by starting small. Before Simmons begins actually breeding tropical fish, which is his ultimate goal, he will be buying fish through a wholesaler for resale.

While he said angelfish are his personal favorite tropical fish, he plans to carry a wide variety of fish for sale.

"We're hoping to experiment to see what sells before we decide what the final inventory is," said Owens.

Billy's Tropical Fish Farm is located in the basement of Monument Plaza on Center Square in Allentown, but his fish will only be available through his Web site, [www.billystropicalfish.com](http://www.billystropicalfish.com).

### Allentown company taps the sea for new product

An Allentown firm, Bio Med Sciences (BMS) has made the jump from medical products to the beauty industry with a new product, which it said will use moisturization and natural skin-tightening ingredients to reduce wrinkles.

botanicals (specifically giant bladdered kelp) and is used by wearing a nighttime patch over target areas, much in the same way a teeth-whitening system would be used.

"We saw some pretty profound effects," said Dillon.

The firm will begin marketing the product in national lifestyle magazines and on cable networks in the Philadelphia and Lehigh Valley areas during August.

Dillon said the product will also be provided in gift baskets handed out at the Emmy Awards in September, a promotional idea he credits to interns, Kayla Kassis and Kate Groshong.

More information can be obtained on the BMS Web site [www.silon.com](http://www.silon.com) or the product Web site [www.seallure.com](http://www.seallure.com).

### RMS cuts ribbon on new Bethlehem office

RMS, a global BPO (business process outsourcing) and recovery services company, held a ribbon cutting ceremony Aug. 7 to celebrate the opening of its new headquarters office facility in the Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII in Bethlehem.

According to a press release, the new 80,000-square-foot office facility employs more than 800 RMS associates and is the first office project to be opened in LVIP VII; the beginning of the redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel property.

"We are very pleased with our new office facility and that we are able to maintain our global headquarters in the Lehigh Valley," said David Hushner,