

'BUILDING IN A BOX'



Record-Eagle photos/Jan-Michael Stump

Inphastos founder Paul Bandrowski.

Inphastos, Bandrowski ready to change construction industry

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TRVERSE CITY — Every franchise began with one location.

Once his “business in a box” construction system is duplicated regionally and nationally, Inphastos founder and chief executive officer Paul Bandrowski wants to fondly remember Traverse City as the place where it all began.

A former technology executive, Bandrowski aims to employ what he calls his “1.0 Solution” of factory-built construction components in the spring. He believes Inphastos will revolutionize the industry.

“I’m really excited about leveraging all that here in Traverse City,” Bandrowski said. “Then once we’ve done that, that’s when we go on the road. That’s when we take our prototype plant and turn it into a plant in Grand Rapids, a plant in Indianapolis, a plant in Florida and a plant in Chicago. We’re building almost like the McDonald’s of the manufacturing of component housing.

“We want to build a replicable platform that can be re-used and re-deployed and done in many other cities. It just happens that we live in Traverse City. The incubator and the genesis of this thing happens to be in Traverse City.”

Founded in March after what Bandrowski said was six months of research in how to build homes and multi-residence complexes better, faster and cheaper, Inphastos operates out of a pair of plants west of Traverse City and a pair of offices southeast of town.

For now, Acting as the CEO of North Bay Capital, Bandrowski went before the Acme Township Planning Commission on Monday to make a presentation for his plan for the site of the former Acme Kmart at 6455 U.S. 31.



From left, Victor Padilla, David Kirkham and Ed Bergdahl work a project at Inphastos, which builds the components for a house and then assembles it on-site.

Acme Planning and Zoning Administrator Shawn Winter said Bandrowski — who received “pre-qualification” approval in September, likely will submit a formal application for the planned development. A formal public hearing would follow and would him go to the full township board for approval.

Bandrowski has an option to buy the property and hopes to close in November in what will become the “world corporate headquarters” for Inphastos. Bandrowski said he will start a minor build-out for offices within the 85,000-square-foot building to also serve as the company’s test laboratory, handling research and development.

Bandrowski also is talking to the Michigan Land Bank Authority to purchase a large portion of the former Pugsley Correctional Facility between Kingsley and Fife Lake and its more than 150 acres as

a future production site.

While working on a system to improve the construction process, Bandrowski said Inphastos is capable of churning out 3,000 square feet of building material a day from two warehouses on East Traverse Highway. Bandrowski expects that figure to grow to 8,000 when the 1.0 Solution rolls out in the spring. Daily production could grow to 10,000 or 12,000 square feet in the future.

“We’re not there yet, but within a year to 18 months we’ll be able to build a 1,500- to 2,000-square-foot house,” he said. “We’ll erect that house in two days. From a slab or a foundation, that house will be fully sealed in two days.”

Bandrowski said the industry has been using the same building process for far too long.

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James Oakley, left, and Charles Moore discuss a project underway at Inphastos, which builds the components for a house and then assembles it on-site.

BOX *Inphastos, Bandrowski ready to change industry*

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“The country has kind of woken up in a big way to the fact that we have a major labor problem in the area of construction,” Bandrowski said. “Our timelines are ridiculous. The affordability is going out of whack throughout the country. We’re building the same way today we did a hundred years ago. Literally.”

Bandrowski said it would be like ordering all the parts to for a vehicle and having people assemble it outside before you got the keys months later and paid for it. He said Inphastos can change the construction field like Amazon did for the retail industry and IKEA for furniture.

While manufactured homes often are delivered on-site in one or two pieces, an Inphastos house will arrive at a building a site in several components ready for assembly. Bandrowski said Inphastos is

more about the process than the products.

“We’re building the system,” he said. “That’s really important to understand. We’re building the platform to be able to do that.”

Bandrowski said Inphastos will work *with* builders and developers instead of competing against them.

“We’re not trying to disrupt Traverse City,” he said. “In fact, Traverse City has a tremendous amount of smart people, both investors and builders, developers, people who have been doing construction for a long time. We’re leveraging all of their skills, we’re talking to all of them, we’re picking their brains, we’re partnering with them. We’re using Traverse City as a prototype community where we can develop and perfect this.”

With challenges facing the construction work force, Bandrowski said building things “faster, better, cheaper” is a benefit for everyone in the process, especially for the end consumer.

“We think there is an opportunity to reduce the price of housing over the long-term by 20 to 30 percent,” Bandrowski said.

While builders likely won’t make as much on each individual house, the

quicker production times will allow them to move on to another project sooner. And Bandrowski said he can trim construction waste from 25 percent to only 3 percent.

Bandrowski said Inphastos has hired many employees in a short amount of time. Some of the company’s workers have decades of construction experience. Others come from the world of technology and engineering, and — like the CEO himself — have absolutely no background in building.

“In nine months, now we have 35 employees and we are doing a variety of beta jobs for all different customers,” he said. “We’re manufacturing content. Our full 1.0 Solution will be available in the spring of the year. We’re moving at lightning speed.”

Bandrowski envisions expanding his payroll.

“We’re adding a lot of jobs,” he said. “Inphastos, from an engineering and a corporate side, we anticipate in the next few years that we’ll have 100 employees or more. In addition, the manufacturing side has the potential of hundreds of jobs in trucking, warehouse, distribution ... That’s a lot of good jobs.

“I think this is a win-win for the community.”