

## CATCHING UP WITH STOREXPRESS

The Keystore recently spoke with Pennsylvania Self Storage Association members Frank Certo and Jess Casto of STORExpress to discuss what their business has been up to so far this year. STORExpress has been busy with new projects, marketing, and community involvement.

STORExpress has been around for 22 years and, like many self storage operations, spent its first ten years figuring out how to navigate the self storage industry. Now STORExpress has ten facilities in Pennsylvania and Ohio and will be adding two more Pennsylvania locations. The first new Pennsylvania location will be coming this spring in Mt. Lebanon, PA at 98 Vanadium Road. Another new location in Pittsburgh at South Hills is also coming soon and will be located at 2140 Sawmill Run Boulevard.

Since getting the hang of things in its first ten years, STORExpress has begun to buy larger spaces and has become a leader in innovative storage spaces including art space, band rooms, and indoor parking showrooms. Purchasing larger spaces led to specialty spaces through reimagining how to use bigger spaces such as a bowling alley or an old school. One of four new properties recently added by STORExpress includes an old flea market with an atrium. A wedding vendor has even reached out to STORExpress about turning the atrium into a wedding venue. STORExpress is currently involved in about five ongoing projects in which they are working on phasing up new properties.

In addition to their new properties, another project STORExpress has been working on is marketing. They teamed up with national SSA and Florida SSA member StoragePug to revamp their online presence, which resulted in a modern, clean, and simple to navigate [website](#). STORExpress also has a full-time videographer on their team to help with marketing efforts and to maintain their online presence. The [videos](#) produced cover a wide variety of topics from facility tours, to some of their unique storage options, to storage how-to videos. STORExpress even put together a fun [Superbowl commercial](#) this year to create a buzz around their business. Through its marketing efforts, STORExpress continues to maintain a positive online presence, something that is crucial for any self storage operation in the modern world.

STORExpress has also been keeping busy by getting involved in its facilities' local communities. Managers at each one of their properties take on quarterly events to benefit their communities. These events often partner with local charities and organizations to provide services for the community. For example, one facility partnered with a charity to make beds for local foster kids who were previously sleeping on mattresses on the bare floor. Another example is facilities working with four different local food pantries to help stock their shelves. One facility's manager even heard about a local little league team having their equipment stolen and ran

a drive to collect donations and petition local businesses to help replace what had been stolen.

Another example of a community event to be put on by STORExpress is the upcoming Grand Opening of their Mt. Lebanon location. STORExpress plans to bring in some of the 30 food trucks they have as tenants in order to bring a fun, innovative spin to a self storage facility opening. This event aims to bring the community together while also promoting a new local self storage facility. By promoting their business in this way, STORExpress makes itself part of its local community and shows residents that they are there to build relationships.

By talking with *The Keystore*, Frank Certo and Jess Casto of STORExpress gave great examples of how to continue growing as a business through their creative takes on what a self storage space is, their marketing strategy and online presence, and their community involvement. STORExpress and its story can serve as inspiration for how to continue to grow as a self storage operation through creativity, savvy marketing, and interacting with your local community.

*Jessica Casto is an experienced marketing and sales manager with a diverse history. She has over 15 years of sales and leadership experience. Her passion for the community and her ability to thrive in customer relationship management led her to a storage career 8 years ago, where she realized that she could service her community in a variety of empowering ways. Today Jessica is the Marketing Manager for STORExpress Self Storage in Pittsburgh PA.*

*Frank Certo has over 25 years as a professional leader and business coach. He captains a team of winners specializing in sales management, operations, unique marketing programs, personnel development and staffing. His experience spans several industries, including the last 15 years in the self-storage industry. Frank has served on the Board of the PASSA for the last 6 years.*