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## Layoffs spur interest in franchising

By STACY WESCOE  
Business Journal Staff

When Gregory Trexler was laid off from his job last fall — the second time in about two years he'd been laid off — he said he saw two options.

He asked himself, "What am I going to do now? Am I going to find another job, invest another two years and have it happen again, or do I want to plan for something else?"

Trexler, who had worked locally for an insurance company, said he decided he wanted to take his future into his own hands. His wife, Danielle, quit her job and they invested in a Java's Brewin' franchise. The couple opened the eatery in April on Broad Street in Bethlehem.

### Growing interest

Trexler was far from alone in making such a decision.

Unemployment is up in Pennsylvania and across the nation. In May the unemployment rate rose nationally from 5 percent to 5.5 percent. In Pennsylvania it rose from 5 percent to 5.2 percent.

The higher number of people finding themselves without a job has led to a greater number of people looking to invest in franchises.

The idea "is more popular than ever right now," said Don Johnson, principal of Diamond Financial Services, a national company based in New Jersey that specializes in helping people get franchise loans. He said in May and June he was getting a very large volume of inquiries from individuals in Pennsylvania and other states looking to open a franchise.

The term for the phenomenon is "forced entrepreneurship." Johnson said that more people, especially those in their 40s, 50s and 60s, find it difficult to head back into the



Photos by Amy Leap and Stacy Wescoe

**New and established franchise businesses are located throughout Eastern Pennsylvania. High unemployment is leading more people to investigate franchise ownership, but loans to get started have become harder to obtain.**

## Lawyers see uptick in cases involving credit card debt

By JENNIFER TROXELL  
Business Journal Correspondent

ney David Schwartz is all too familiar with assisting individuals to reduce or eliminate their debt — unfortunately, most of his clients are