

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>house price Find out what your home is worth with a free home value estimate. www.HomeValueComparison.com</p> | <p>House Price See what your house is worth with a free home value estimate. www.homewortha.com</p> | <p>walt disney world orlando Orlando Hotels for \$19.99/Night includes 2 Arabian Nights Tix! www.DiscountOrlandoVacation.info</p> | <p>Maryland Homes for Sale Directory of reputable Maryland home finding resources online. marylandhomesale.info</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

SUNDAY, October 28, 2007

Subscribe | Advertise | Contact Us | Newsstands

Carroll County Times



WEATHER SPONSORED BY:

48 F
Forecast



home | info | news | public record | sports | features | special sections | classifieds

Email Headlines

Talk

Video News

Subscriber Services

Place A Classified

Photo Reprints

jobs | autos | homes

Search Archives

Market Place

Get Email Updates from the Carroll County Times

Enter your email address:



In Focus

Buy Weblo, sell high

By Jordan Bartel, Times Staff Writer

Sunday, October 28, 2007

His market's bubble may be bursting, but Mike Jameson is doing just fine.

In fact, he's more than fine. He's great. He has property down the East Coast, from Connecticut to Florida. He's safely set up shop in places with picturesque names like Siesta Key and Skidaway Island.

All told, Jameson owns 227 properties. He also happens to own 24 states and 1,026 cities. He's building an empire.

It helps that much of Jameson's real estate isn't exactly real.

Jameson is a member of the Weblo.com community, where people can buy and sell whatever in the world their hearts desire, from football stadiums and national landmarks to Thai beaches and Alpine ski resorts.

"I'm always on the hunt," said Jameson who, in the real world, lives is a real estate agent in Manchester, Conn.

"I'm a Disney fanatic, so I so scooped up Lake Buena Vista. So I got Disney World. Then I got Walt Disney's birthplace in Chicago. It's all good fun."

Good fun and surprisingly profitable. Here's how Weblo works: The site is set up like a virtual world, complete with 160,000 towns, villages and cities and other attractions.

Most everything in the world is also in Weblo. Membership is free, and regular properties initially sell for \$2 to free members, while VIP members - those who spring for an annual subscription fee of \$269 - pay \$1 for unsold properties.



Our Display Ads

Our Advertisers

Online Poll

Do you like the proposal for four commissioners elected by district and one elected at large?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

[View Results](#)



A member deposits money using an Internet pay service like Paypal, then goes about building their portfolio. They pick up properties, buy some from others. Basically they become virtual mayors - creating their "town" by building up its Web site and adding elements like videos, pictures, polls and blogs. Different attractions in a town, say, the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster, can be added to a city's site.

The better the Web site, the more traffic it attracts and the more money virtual mayors make.

Weblo - the name comes from the Web and "lo," a Farsi word meaning "to take, own or have" - pays its virtual mayors for hits and ad revenue generated by city Web sites. Weblo members earn money every time there's a transaction in their territory - say if someone buys one beach from the owner of Florida. Members also make money by selling their property for profit.

Weblo is insanely popular. Almost 10,000 cities have sold worldwide and more than 61,000 people have joined as members. This is big money, too. Properties originally going for \$2 or \$5 have raked in substantial profit. For example, California just sold for \$53,000. New York for \$19,350. Las Vegas, which recently resold for \$2,300, netted the seller \$1,970 in profit. Seattle, which was bought for \$40, sold for \$2,000.

Maryland, it seems, is up for grabs. Westminster is \$5. So are Salisbury, Silver Spring and Frederick. Columbia is a steal at \$40. So is Baltimore, at just \$43.

"The first property I bought was my hometown in Glastonbury, Conn.," Jameson said. "Then you usually buy a personal vacation spot. Then you're hooked."

Weblo, launched in December 2006, was founded by Internet entrepreneur Rocky Mirza. Nine years ago, Mirza decided people should be able to own things they couldn't really afford in the real world.

Weblo is very much Monopoly on steroids, Mirza said.

"People play Monopoly and feel rich," Mirza said. "It feels like real money. I just thought, wouldn't it be nice if I can create a platform for that at a higher level, a world level?"

Mirza spent seven years building Weblo's database of information and isn't at all surprised by its success. Since its

Wantz Chevrolet



\$43,900

2006 C5500 Dump Truck

0% FOR 60 SELEC
0000

[Click here for more!](#)



Manchester Motors



**THERE IS
0000 A DIFFERENCE
MANCHESTER**



**GET READY FOR
0000 OLD MAN WINTER
4X4 SALE**

founding, Weblo has grown to include celebrities to "buy," or, rather, to virtually represent (Jameson, for example, "owns" Elvis Presley, Paris Hilton and Alfred Hitchcock) as well as domain names to gather.

Weblo will also soon launch a virtual presidential election, to coincide with the United States 2008 presidential contest.

Mirza said what he's really done is create an economy where the average person is in charge. With Weblo, Mirza wanted to give the power to the people, a social networking site that actually makes cents - and lots of dollars. Weblo, like Facebook and MySpace, is yet another social networking site. But unlike those sites, Weblo pays members for its popularity.

Weblo is also very much a fantasy.

"Many buy a place that they've never been but where they want to be," he said. "Or they buy their memories, like where they went on their honeymoon or where they saw a great game."

For Jameson, the bottom line is Weblo is fun. He searches daily for new, interesting places to buy, to invest in. He recently bought Washington, D.C., for \$99 from a member who bought it for \$33. Of course, He has plans to resell it for a big profit.

"People who really like towns, have a connection to them, it's hard to express that," Jameson said. "This is the way to do that."

Looking for a virtual purchase? You can find some on Weblo.com.

Currently, members have several virtual cities, states and landmarks available for purchase that could be resold at a later date.

For many of these virtual purchases, a lot of real-life cash is required:

Cities available

- Arlington, Va., is for sale for \$9,900.
- Boston is for sale for \$25,000.
- Montclair, Calif., is for sale for \$3,900.
- Toms River, N.J., is for sale for \$35,000.

Properties available

- Washington-Dulles International Airport is for sale for \$4,000.
- The University of Maryland in College Park's Comcast Center is for sale for \$200.00.
- The Maryland State House is for sale for \$200.00.
- Daytona Beach is for sale for \$100.00.

Ages of users

- 18-35: 68 percent
- 35-50: 22 percent
- 50-plus: 10 percent

On Weblo.com, more than 9,500 virtual cities have sold worldwide since its launch in December 2006. The Web site has more than 61,000 members.

Sale highlights

- Ontario, Canada, was resold for \$16,900. The original buyer paid \$11,500 and made \$5,350 profit.
- Las Vegas recently resold for \$2,300. The seller made \$1,970 profit.
- Seattle resold for \$2,000. Profit: \$1,960.
- Lincoln, Neb., was bought for \$15 and resold for \$800.
- Rockville was bought for \$5 and resold for \$500.
- Disney World was bought for \$1 and resold for \$500.
- The Louvre was bought for \$1 and resold for \$250.
- Heinz Field in Pittsburgh was bought for \$1.50 and resold for \$150.
- The Empire State Building was bought for \$1 and resold for \$250.

Where Weblo members are from

- United States: 52 percent
- Canada: 15 percent
- United Kingdom: 10 percent
- Australia: 10 percent
- Other: 13 percent

Age categories:

- 18-35: 68 percent
- 35-50: 22 percent

- 50-plus: 10 percent.

Reach staff writer Jordan Bartel at 410-857-7862 or jordan.bartel@carrollcountytimes.com.

[Print this story](#) [Email this story](#) [Return to in focus index](#) «

Myrtle Beach Golf Package - Golf Packages in Myrtle Beach, SC
Golf Villas and Oceanfront Specials www.MyrtleBeachGolfDirectors.com

Ads by Google

Advertise on this site



Comments:


Add Your Own Comment:

Please review the legal policies posted [here](#) before posting a comment. To report abuse click [here](#).

Name:

Comments:

Current Word Count:

Image Verification: 

Copyright © 2007 Carroll County Times. All Rights Reserved
[Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Join Our Team](#)