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## Toms River "mayor" is in search of profits

Posted by the Ocean County Observer on 05/14/07

BY KIM PREDHAM  
STAFF WRITER

There's a new mayor in Toms River.

His name is Michael Monahan, a 20-year-old resident of Marlboro. And he's been busy — Monahan is also the mayor of Point Pleasant, Freehold and Plainfield.

Confused yet? Don't be.

Monahan's rule over these New Jersey towns exists purely within the confines of Weblo.com, a new virtual world that allows members to buy properties, towns, cities and states in the United States and abroad.

Internet entrepreneur Rocky Mirza created Weblo.com as a twist on social networking sites such as MySpace.

Members of those networks expend time and effort creating interesting Web pages, but do not see the profits the company reaps, Weblo.com spokesman Colin Trethewey said. In the Weblo world, members can set up Web sites devoted to a town, a property, a state or a celebrity. They can also register domain names, all of which can later be resold for a profit.

Now when members provide eye-catching content, Trethewey said, "You actually get rewarded for that."

Since its launch in December, Weblo claims the site has registered 26,024 users as of May 8. The company has sold 708 states and provinces and 8,256 cities worldwide.

Many towns sell for a nominal fee, said Weblo spokesman Colin Trethewey. Members can then try to resell their properties for a higher price.

"Mayors" also profit every time someone buys a property in their town, and when someone clicks on ads on their town pages. State "governors" are paid in a similar fashion.

Monahan shelled out about \$40 for his four towns, he said. He recouped about \$10 through ad revenue, he said.

If no one purchases Toms River for their own benefit, he hopes maybe a company might buy the Web site to advertise their business.

So far, no one is beating down his door to scoop up his towns. But Monahan believes members are focused right now on buying and selling larger properties like Las Vegas and Dallas. Once that frenzy has died down, he anticipates greater interest in his holdings.

Monahan is taking a gamble, but if Weblo's figures are any indication, it might be a gamble worth making.

The original owner of Las Vegas bought the city for \$35, for example. The next buyer paid \$430, and a third buyer paid a whopping \$2,300, according to Weblo.com.

The person with the foresight to claim Washington, D.C., for \$33 later sold the nation's capital for \$99.

"I think it is worth it," Monahan said.



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