

The logo for 'THE CROP SHOP' features the word 'THE' in yellow, 'CROP' in red, and 'SHOP' in yellow, all in a bold, sans-serif font.

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The logo for 'ALTMAN BUSINESS SOLUTIONS' features the word 'ALTMAN' in a large, white, serif font, with 'BUSINESS SOLUTIONS' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The tagline 'Pathways to Profit' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font at the bottom. A small graphic of a diamond or gemstone is positioned above the letter 'A' in 'ALTMAN'.

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# News Release

## **SOLD! *The Crop Shop* Thrives and Grows**

The Crop Shop, a colorful scrapbooking store in Greensburg, has overcome the challenges of a slow economy and is growing and attracting an increasing number of customers. Recent organizational changes at The Crop Shop have included a transition in ownership, and Business Consultant Virginia Altman, CEO and principal, Altman Business Solutions, played an important role.

Virginia helped founder and seller Cindy Greeley of Latrobe to prepare for the sale of her business, assess market conditions and complete transactions. New owner Cindy Kendi Huffine of Scottsdale has scheduled various activities as well as a store re-opening and ceremony on August 4.

“The sale of The Crop Shop in 2011 took about three months, a remarkably short time given the state of the economy,” Virginia said. “There has been a dearth of sales activity in the marketplace. People have been afraid to make a move. In 2008, for example, the sale of a small business took five months on average compared to 16 months in 2010.”

Virginia added, “There is a special place for entrepreneurs who can come up with an idea for a business and another for those who can take an organization to the next level. Between Cathy Greeley and Cindy Kendi Huffine, we are witnessing a type of business evolution – a transition and progression in a positive direction that benefits our entire community.”

**History of Success.** After 4.5 years of successful operation with annual sales exceeding \$100,000, Founder Cathy Greeley sold The Crop Shop to Cindy Kendi. Greeley explained how the store’s achievements have included the ability to offer customers a product line with unique or harder-to-get items, an emphasis on quality and expertise, and an atmosphere of fun. These key undertakings have helped The Crop Shop to build customer traffic from about 400 customers who “visited the store” on its opening day in 2007 to more than 6,000 “names in the database” today.

New Owner Huffine “got hooked” on the craft about 10 years ago when she attended a scrapbooking party and later when involved with online auction sales. Her career has taken her to positions in diverse industries ranging from pavement resurfacing to food service. Huffine considers ownership of The Crop Shop to be “a dream come true and outstanding opportunity to be creative and do something I love to do.”

**Popular Demand.** The Crop Shop is a mecca for scrapbookers, almost entirely women crafters, who attend classes, buy decorative materials, or work together to preserve family photos and mementos in creatively designed keepsake books. Known as “croppers,” scrapbook enthusiasts are sometimes compared to Quilting Bee participants who combine quilt-making with advice-sharing and the pleasantries of socialization. Scrapbooking has been called the third-most popular craft nationwide. More than 4 million women in the United States consider themselves to be scrapbookers.

**Creative Touch.** “Scrapbookers are happy people. You have to be happy in what you are doing,” commented Greeley who plans to continue her cropping projects even though she is moving away from the business. Greeley has cropped happily since her sister introduced her to the craft in 1998. When living in Morocco in the early 2000s, she formed a club of friends

who cropped together. After returning to the United States and working as a physician's assistant, she took the next step and opened The Crop Shop.

A customer of the store for many years, Huffine first met Greeley when she took a class in cropping and became involved with various activities. Huffine liked The Crop Shop's reputation for quality service, distinctive materials, personal touch and slogan "This is THE place to crop."

A seasoned business professional, Huffine had held positions at Kendi Enterprise, Inc., Miss Martha's Tea Room, and an Ebay sales business, Scottsdale; as well as with Bell's Banquets, Mt. Pleasant. Given her credentials and experiences, Huffine was excited to learn The Crop Shop was for sale and in need of a new owner.

"I respect everything that Cathy has done. It all comes from the heart. I value that because I work from my heart as well," said Huffine who plans to continue core offerings and add several concepts such as "new centerpieces and favors, unique hand-crafted invitations for use by party and event planners, and pre-fabricated materials designed by a special group of artists."