



Date: June 16, 2009

Location: North Andover

Program: First & Main Unveiling

Length: 19:21

Santo Messina, Richard Nardella, Tina Messina and Arthur Eilertson discuss the past and future of First & Main Marketplace at the plaza's sign unveiling.

Santo Messina:

The biggest changes that I've seen – you see, I grew up here in this town, and all the people knew me. All my customers knew me. I used to like to stand in front of the store there and greet every one of them. And they knew me by name. What I would do, after a while, for Christmas, I would hold a roast beef dinner for them at the Knights of Columbus here. And I knew a fellow that used to be in the bus business, and he would go around to all the old age places and pick them up and bring them down. I fed them all. Believe me, I enjoyed myself with it.

Richard Nardella:

All the money the Messinas have invested in this town – Santo, his wife Anne, the Messina family – we're very appreciative to have these kind of people in town, these kind of merchants, this kind of a facility. It's just a real testament to the Messina family that they've carried on generation after generation after generation, and we hope it continues for a long, long time.

Tina Messina:

When we embarked on this...we made a commitment to want to redefine the downtown. We saw that the downtown was starting to fall behind the rest of the town, and we knew that this was an opportunity to give it a jumpstart. So we decided what we wanted to do was to take the building and bring it into the architecture of the downtown. That's why you see it the way it looks today. ...Part of our goal when we thought about this was to get other merchants in the downtown area to start picking it up a little bit in terms of maybe them changing their architecture. And hopefully we can start tracking some of the merchants that most downtowns would like to see.

Arthur Eilertson:

If you look at the sign, it's an extension of the architecture. I think for a designer to do this kind of work, you have to work with an architect, you have to believe in what they do. I mean, this is beautiful. So it's key that it reflects that. ...That moves the value up, it moves the whole town up. When these banners go up, it's going to blow you away.