



-Monroe News photo by TOM HAWLEY Monroe Environmental hosted an open house Tuesday evening to show its new remodeled facility.

# Monroe Environmental diversifies, rebounds from recession

By Alex Alusheff

As of Thursday, July 17, 2014, 12:04 p.m.

When automotive giants such as General Motors declared bankruptcy during the recession, Monroe Environmental lost 70 percent of its business and president Gary Pashaian had to decide whether to close the business or continue.

"I did what my dad always told me: 'Everything starts with a sale,'" said Mr. Pashaian, who chose to expand his purification system sales beyond the automotive industry to municipal water plants, wastewater treatment plants and oil companies.

The company downsized to 15 people, but by 2011 sales were at pre-recession levels and by 2012 it had tripled business, Mr. Pashaian said.

Mr. Pashaian shared his success story to roughly 75 people consisting of employees, city and county officials, business owners and community members during Monroe Environmental's open

house to celebrate the 5,000-square-foot addition to its office at W. Front and Roessler Sts.

Monroe Environmental since has grown to 65 employees and attributes a portion of its success to its sales staff "who are focused on growing the business," Mr. Pashaian said. Dave Bilbrey, national sales manager for the firm, said the choice to diversify helped expand the business.

"Part of our growth is a great leader, and Gary had a vision," Mr. Bilbrey said of the decision to diversify.

Recently, Monroe Environmental completed a water clarification project in Colorado and sold oil and water separators to CITGO. It also is making an acid etching unit for Gerda, Mr. Bilbrey said.

GM and Ford now are back as customers, Mr. Pashaian said, who is focused on the growing his company once

more. Mr. Bilbrey sees some of that growth from clean-air engineering.

"It's a huge industry with the EPA tightening down on air pollution, and we are poised to be a part of that service," he said.

Growth doesn't just benefit the firm but also the city.

"Employment is critical to us anytime someone is looking to going to buy a home or start a business here," said Dan Swallow, director of Economic and Community Development for Monroe. "It takes that job base to drive the local economy."

Mr. Pashaian is looking to retain and grow that job base.

"The real key to our future now is to continue to grow," he said. "If we don't grow, we can't provide a future for (our employees)."