

DIAMOND AWARDS

NONPROFIT COMPANY WINNERS

Smith's leadership guides Goodwill through big changes

BY TIM SCHOOLEY

Michael Smith sits but doesn't quite settle into the chair of his office that still feels like a new hotel room, unlived in but ready.

A few months after a major organizational move, Smith can take satisfaction in leading Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania from its longtime home on the South Side to a new flex building in Lawrenceville.

"This has been a pretty incredible year as far as changes to the organization," said Smith, president and CEO of Goodwill. "All for the better."

Goodwill's move to Lawrenceville is just one of a number of significant changes.

At the same time Goodwill was planning the move, the organization continued to expand its network of retail stores, including a big box hybrid location in North Huntington.

After selling its former headquarters for a little more than \$6 million last year, Goodwill continues to pursue its first capital campaign since the early 1990s.

For Smith, it's all part of the strategic plan the organization established in 2006, a blueprint that's brought bracing change but also growth and improvement.

The retail chain returned to profitability last year, and the organization's new Lawrenceville Workforce Development Center is expected to generate at least \$300,000 in annual savings from operational efficiencies and better energy use. Smith is hopeful Goodwill is on target to



JOE WOJCIK

Michael Smith, president of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania, in the Tropical Forest Conservatory at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens.

reach its \$14 million fundraising goal as well.

Mark Popovich, a senior managing partner in the Pittsburgh office of HFF Inc., who has worked closely with Goodwill through the big move and is now a board member, said Smith did his share of leading such change.

"Nothing goes as planned in a real estate deal. Budgets get hit. Timing gets hit," Popovich said. "He also had to change the mind of his staff that initially was very resistant to moving."

Through it all, Popovich said Smith remained calm while making bold decisions to expand and push forward in an economy that has dampened big decision-making at many companies and organizations.

Michael Smith

President and CEO, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania

- ◆ **AGE:** 55
- ◆ **EDUCATION:** Waynesburg College, MBA; Robert Morris University, BA, business administration
- ◆ **LEADERSHIP STYLE:** "I always try to lead by example and allow the good people who work for me to do what they do well."
- ◆ **WHAT IS A GREAT DAY AT WORK?** "Any day when I get to stop and really talk with the people who receive services at Goodwill."