



Rodney Carey Photographed by Glenn Triest

create an opportunity for Detroit and the surrounding areas to capitalize on its strengths, which are its excellent workforce and very strong industry."

He explains there is a weed called pennycress that is grown in Michigan on arid/marginal land. For every acre cultivated during its quarterly harvests, 100 gallons of biodiesel can be produced. Baer's company has partnered with Focus: HOPE and The Power Alternative to utilize their land to grow it; three acres in Detroit are being used to grow pennycress, generating 1,200 gallons of biodiesel annually. Because of this, Baer's goal lies in self-sustaining biofuel, not just foreign oil independence. He notes, "We want to help Detroit lead the nation and lead the world in biofuel, by lowering fuel price at the pump and making local companies operate more competitively."

Joe Faris credits his father as his mentor. "He's been a huge inspiration to me – he works in a creative industry and works for himself." As the innovative dynamo behind Motor City Denim Company, Faris now follows in his father's footsteps.

In leading up to the line's launch, his biggest challenge has been keeping prices competitive for consumers without outsourcing production. The denim products are manufactured here, and he asserts that Michigan could handle manufacturing most garments, with the infrastructure and workforce already in place. Ultimately he wants to be remembered as somebody who started bringing the garment industry not only back to

the United States, but more specifically to Michigan.

He just wants to go back to the roots of it all – for fashion and for himself. Faris grew up in Lathrup Village, and finds inspiration in the metro Detroit area. "It's my home. I've worked in New York, L.A.; Texas – even though I worked in other states, I never officially moved. I always had a residence here."

He suggests some easy things for a man to improve his wardrobe. First of all, throw away every free tee shirt you got in a contest. Then, key in on a fit of a jean that looks great. Stick with that. Add in a couple of great blazers they can combine with other items, and make sure to have a kick-ass leather jacket.

Men don't like to shop because there's a perception that it's not for the alpha male. There's a stigma if guys pay any attention to their appearance, but Faris thinks it could be changed, and there's nothing inherently wrong with a "guy's guy" caring about the way he looks. Out to do this – and improve our state's economy – with his company, Faris says, "there's no turning back now."

“ If I can get beat up or risk life and limb, I'm going to be in line for that ride," says Rodney Carey, CEO of Woodward Asset Capital and a maverick not only on the slopes or riding his dirt bike, but also in the real estate industry. Carey, who moved around constantly as a kid, was thrilled to settle in Detroit.

"This is where I want to be," says the former mortgage finance exec. "I like it here for everything that's good and bad about it. There's opportunity in Detroit. This place has to reinvent itself."

That's also the approach he brings to business. In 2007, Carey teamed up with realtor Ronald Jasgur and construction finance guru Gerald Kazakov to create Woodward Asset Capital. They bought bulk pools of foreclosed homes to rehab and sell. They soon realized why their approach was successful (and banks were not) and they began developing software to help banks improve their success rates.

WAC's first product, OfferSubmission.com, streamlines REO (foreclosure) sales and eliminates fraud. It succeeded so well that they ran themselves out of their original business.

"Ron has great street knowledge and insight into the buyer's psyche," Carey says. "I have a history in banking. And Gerry is a visionary at conditioning property. We have a great team." This spring, they launched VerifiedShortSale.com.

"Nobody looks at distressed properties as a product yet," Carey says. "Our systems expedite sales. Lay that over your internal operations, and you've got a successful collaboration. That's what it takes to rebuild our housing industry."

-Lynne Meredith Schreiber

**"There's no turning back now."
-Joe Faris**