



# CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Detroit and Southeast Michigan's premier business news and information website

Advanced Search: Detroit Business»



- Home
- This Week's Issue
- News
- Crain's Awards
- Features
- Lists/Resources
- Columns
- Blogs
- Events
- Video

| Detroit Jobs | Free E-Mail Signup | Subscriber Service | Mobile | Contacts | Advertise | Classifieds

February 20, 2011 8:00 PM

## A CONVERSATION WITH: Joe Faris



**Joe Faris** is co-owner and senior designer of Sterling Heights-based **Motor City Denim Co.**, which plans to launch its first collection of "Industrial Couture" for men and women April 1. (An original Feb. 1 date was delayed.)

The company is the culmination of a longtime dream for Faris, a veteran designer for such brands as **Bugle Boy** and **Ralph Lauren**, as well as a 2008 "Project Runway" contestant.

Faris went to a Sterling Heights manufacturer of protective coverings for robots, **TD Industrial Coverings Inc.**, to make the project happen. After some retooling, Motor City Denim was in business.

TDIC President Mark D'Andreta projects Motor City, a TDIC subsidiary, will have sales of up to \$350,000 for 2011 and give his second-stage business a boost.

DetroitMakeltHere.com, *Crain's* site for creative entrepreneurs, caught up with Faris. Here are excerpts from the interview with freelancer Ellen Piligian:

**What has been your biggest challenge in making this happen?** First, finding a partner, and now, sales. There are so many pieces to the puzzle. One challenge with **RedFly** (an earlier Faris business) was that I did \$1.2 million in sales the first year. I exceeded expectations. Then I needed to finance it. You can have the greatest product, but without the right sales force or marketing, it's like a tree falling in the forest. That's where "Project Runway" helped. I got noticed.

**How are you marketing Motor City Denim?** Right now, it's social media. We are at the height of where social media is changing the landscape of advertising. ... (Of course,) I would love to spend \$50,000 and have an ad in *Vogue*.

**What are your thoughts on Detroit reinventing itself as a garment district?** Some of these suppliers of the Big Three can look at going back into garments. There's a big need for that. ... If you're a smaller garment company and you need to manufacture even 1,000 pair of jeans, that's hard to find. ... We are easier to reach from New York than China. I can design something and have it sewn by the end of the day. That's power. There's a tremendous opportunity for this city to dive heavy into the garment industry.

**What can you tell others about taking a leap like this?** One really good piece of advice that took me a while to learn is: If you need a partner, look for one with qualities you don't have. You don't need another designer to be your partner. I was very fortunate to have met Mark, to have the vision that we can do this here. It's been very hard to find.



### Is Your Business Aware of Changes to Michigan's Unclaimed Property Law?

#### Get Informed!



- New Date for Reporting Unclaimed Property is **July 1**
- Dormancy Period for most properties now **3 years**
- **25% penalty** may be levied ... plus interest

More Information, including free filing software  
[www.michigan.gov/unclaimedproperty](http://www.michigan.gov/unclaimedproperty)

#### Most Read

#### Most Commented

Detroit Symphony cancels rest of 2010-11 season after musicians reject last contract offer

Snyder's bet: Will lower taxes trump lost incentives?

Medicaid payments spared, but health care providers still feel Snyder's budget cuts

Feds charge 21 health professionals in Southeast Michigan, more than 100 nationwide with Medicare fraud

Parent of WJR, WDVD and WDRQ set to be acquired