

January 26, 2010

## Q&A Caring Transitions

**Address:** Ozark

**Phone:** (417) 429-4500

**Web site:** [www.CaringTransitions.net/springfieldmo](http://www.CaringTransitions.net/springfieldmo)

**Owner:** Terry Cernech

**Hours:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; other hours by appointment

**Nature of the business:** Caring Transitions helps Christian County and southern Greene County families who are suddenly confronted with a situation that requires a change in living arrangements.

"Basically, we're involved with helping families ... when they face those life transitions that normally are caused by a triggering event: a divorce, a health situation where they can no longer get the care they need at home and need to go to a facility, or even an empty-nester situation where they find it just makes sense to downsize," explains Terry Cernech, owner of the franchise's Ozark, Mo., location.

Cernech explains that such situations can be overwhelming for families, who may not know where to even start culling through items or how to handle estate sales.

"We want to be a one-call source for helping them handle those physical aspects and take the stress out of those transitions," he said. "As we age and we get into some of those situations ... a lot of those things just appear to be insurmountable."

Cernech said his initial visit, during which he outlines the various services he can provide, is free. Beyond that, the fee is largely determined on the amount of time required.

In addition to helping with estate and real estate sales, Cernech can help people "sort through stuff and make them understand what they can take to their new location." He will take measurements, draw a floor plan of the new living space and help clients make decisions about what to keep.

Additionally, Cernech and his employees can take inventory, help with packing and unpacking and with the shipment of whatever heirlooms may be destined for distant family members.

**Experience:** While this type of service is new for him, Cernech has much business management experience. He spent many years as a regional manager for a fast-food franchise and was general manager of a roofing company. He also owned a quick-printing franchise for several years.

**Challenges:** The economy was Cernech's greatest obstacle. The stock market's nosedive took a big bite out of his personal savings, limiting the amount of money he had to invest in a new business venture. And the tight credit market made getting financing very difficult. But, Cernech said, the Caring Transitions franchise helped him get the financial resources he needed. He opened his business Jan. 1.

**Goals:** Cernech is hopeful that his business will grow as the needs of aging baby boomers change. "I want to build a business that's going to survive and take care of that population," Cernech said.

– By Jan Peterson For the News-Leader