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A solid reputation

Allegany County native's company constructs college residence hall in Keyser

Mona Ridder
Cumberland Times-News

KEYSER, W.Va. — He's an Allegany County native who left the area to find work but now he's returned and is giving other local residents jobs with his Pittsburgh-based company.

David Manthey grew up in Allegany County, graduated from high school and went to work for Carl Belt Inc.

Belt was instrumental in his learning the business, Manthey said recently. "I really appreciate what I learned from him," he said, noting he worked with the local contractor while in he was in college, then went back to work for him after graduating from Virginia Tech until 1993.

"I've always been grateful for the very good education I got with Belt," he said. "While I was there I was treated very well and exposed to a lot of aspects of the construction business."

Belt said that Manthey is a "young man who worked hard and got a good education at Virginia Tech."

When Belt found he needed to make some cutbacks, Manthey was let go. "It was because I thought he would be able to find another job pretty quickly," Belt said.

Manthey moved to Richmond, Va.

"It's the nature of the business that you go where the work is," he said. He was employed by Dick Corp. and Mulach Steel, which closed its construction division in 1999.

"After the third time I was let go ... it led to the relocation of my wife and small children to Pittsburgh," he said.

Manthey said that he didn't want to move again so he started his own business, Manheim Construction. "It was a pretty good time, the business built pretty quickly," he said, noting that his company worked on projects up to \$5 million.

He said the company was named for a town in West Virginia near Rowlesburg where he rehabilitated an old school.

One of the reasons Manthey said his company has been successful is another area resident, Jeff Mauzy, who is his right-hand man. "He also worked for Belt when I was a kid," he said. "He is a very important part of the story because he runs the field work. I couldn't have done it without him."

In January, Manthey created a second company with a merger in partnership with Greg Hand. NDC Manheim now takes on larger projects with Hand in the front-end project development role involving financing, preconstruction issues and design, while Manthey's specialty remains construction.

One of NDC Manheim's largest projects is the new residence hall at Potomac State College. Mauzy, a Short Gap resident, is project manager on the \$16 million construction targeted for completion in the summer of 2007.

David Smith, facilities manager with West Virginia University, said that the university has worked with Manthey on several projects and expects to in the future as well.

"David Manthey is an exceptional contractor to work with," he said. "He's the kind of guy you really enjoy doing business with. I can't say enough about him and his company."

Smith said that Manthey has an obvious desire to satisfy his customers. "He really does care and you don't always see that these days."

Much work is planned for Potomac State as well as the Morgantown campus and Smith said he would expect Manthey to bid on future projects.

Manthey said there have been an increasing number of projects in the region in the last few years — about \$13 million in construction at Alliant Tech as well as the renovation of the Carver Center in Cumberland and the Westernport Senior Center.



The company built a high school in Philippi, worked on the Opera House in Thomas and the B&O Railroad Station in Grafton.

Photos



Plumber Kevin Waybright of Local 152 swabs plumber's glue to attach a coupling on a 4-inch plastic pipe at a residence hall that is being constructed at Potomac State College in Keyser, W.Va. **Wesley Haines/Cumberland Times-News** (Click for larger image)

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The Thomas project is being done a little bit at a time as the community can raise the money for it.

Jobs have also taken Manthey's company to cities in Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

Manthey said his favorite jobs are those in small towns. "It's always a joy for us to come to places like Keyser. People tend to be more honest and direct and there's more trust with people in small towns. Also, we feel the area appreciated more for what we are doing."

Manthey's company em-ploys about 70 people, with 40 from the local area.

He said that he saw many people move away from the Cumberland area growing up because there were no jobs.

"I had friends that moved away but I'm glad to see Cumberland bouncing back," he said, noting he still has strong family ties to Cumberland, where both he and his wife, the former Charleen Mathews, grew up and their parents live.

David's parents are Bill and Ellie Manthey; Charleen's are Bob and Rosemary Mathews. He also has ties to Keyser, where a maternal aunt's family lives.

"That's allowed us to stay close," he said, adding he would have liked to have stayed in the Cumberland area but now he and his wife and their five children have their lives in the Pittsburgh area.

"This is still home," he said of the Cumberland area.

Mona Ridder can be reached at mrider@times-news.com.



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