

Business News

TMB builds its reputation one structure at a time

Local firms provide testimony that makes marketing easy

BY MARK J. YABLONSKY

HAMBURG — When a baseball manager needs a relief pitcher, he calls his bullpen. When someone is sick, they call a doctor. And when businesses and local industrial leaders need help, they pick up the phone and call TMB — T.M. Brennan Contractors, Inc.

Incorporated since 1991, the company is led by the Brennan brothers, Tom and Ted, and it has built a reputation over the years as solid as the structures it builds and renovates. The company is named after Tom Jr., its founder.

"I can't say that there was ever a time when we did a job that we didn't walk away from a positive comment, based on the work that T.M. Brennan did," said Debra Freligh of Sparta-based DMF Media Strategies, one of TMB's marketing agents. "Without exception, every client that we have spoken with has come away with a positive impression of their working relationship with T.M. Brennan."

That includes Terry Thompson, the president and Chief Operating Officer of Sussex Bank, whose Wantage branch was constructed by TMB.

"I was amazed that I did not have to get involved on the construction end of the new branch," Thompson is quoted on the TMB Web site. "Ordinarily I would, but this time I didn't because T.M. Brennan was already fully engaged in all phases of the design and planning. I was confident that I was in good hands."

"We are grateful for Ted's sense of de-

sign, attention to details and practical ideas that kept us on track," added Tony Spillane, one of four owners of the Franklin-based Irish Cottage Inn, which was completely renovated from its former Fone Booth days — in just five months time — by T.M. Brennan a year ago.

While the company now makes good use of its marketing and advertising departments, that old-fashioned "word of mouth" is as effective as the green-and-white TMB logo that adorns company vehicles and work sites alike.

"It goes to perception," acknowledged Ted Brennan, the company's vice president. "And the perception of the company is important to Tom and myself. Perception is reality, and how we are perceived is important to us. And the growth of our business has led us to help support the economic development in the county. Ninety percent of our employees reside here in Sussex County."

And rumor has it that the county is glad to have TMB around.

"They're not only a professional company that does a great job and has a wonderful reputation, they're a company that gives back and supports their community in so many ways," said Tammie Horsfield, president of Sussex County Chamber of Commerce in a separate interview last week. "It's one thing to write a check; it's another thing to go out in the community and work. They go out and volunteer, whether it be at a golf outing or a charitable event. We're fortunate to have them."

The Brennans are originally from New



Brothers Tom, left, and Ted Brennan incorporated their business in 1991.

England and the start of their successful career and home in Sussex County occurred when Tom Sr., their father, first moved here in 1982.

"We used to come visit," recollected Ted Brennan. "Tom (Jr.) moved here in '89 and I came here to help Tom in '91 because he was working on a job. And I never went back."

Nearly 20 years later, the Brennans are proud to call Sussex County home, (though they remain avid Boston Red Sox fans) and just as important to them is the well-being of their employees, who are encouraged and even recruited to stay put with the company for a long time. In turn,

that tends to lead to a stronger, healthier company.

"We've been fortunate in that in the first 12 years of business, we did little or no advertising," Ted added. "But you still have to earn that respect every time. We take nothing for granted. We try not to rest on laurels, and we try to convey that to all of our employees."

"Every building they work on is a testament to their work," noted Eva Szakal of the Manasquan-based Evka Solutions, Inc., another of TMB's marketing agents. "One of their goals is that after the work is done, each of their clients will want to come back and work with them again."