

Contractor News

By Rodney B. Urbano, Vice President

Town and Country Paving

Tom Burns started Town & Country Paving in 1982. At that time he and his soon-to-be wife, Toni Urbano, decided they would start their own paving company. Tom convinced Toni's son, Carmen, to buy a single axle dump truck. Before long, he was paving. Shortly thereafter, all the Urbano Brothers including Mike, Carmen, John, Rodney and Danny were working for Town & Country Paving.

In the early days, Town & Country was primarily a driveway paving contractor in Lake County, Indiana.

Tom was known to drive endlessly around Northwest Indiana looking for potential clients. He soon realized there was a strong need for a residential paving contractor in Jasper and Newton counties, so the entire family moved to Rensselaer, Indiana.

Town & Country got a big break in 1984 with the opportunity to purchase an asphalt plant and Babcock Paving. Although the plant was outdated and required a lot of maintenance, Town & Country produced asphalt from that plant until 1999.

Between 1984 and 1999, Town & Country evolved from exclusively paving driveways to doing street paving for local municipalities and counties, as well as commercial and industrial projects. This was also a period where Jasper and Newton Counties saw a lot of growth, such as the Newton County landfill and numerous factories and distribution centers.

Another opportunity arose in 1993 when Rogers Group offered Town & Country a site at their Newton Stone Quarry to lease and operate a second asphalt plant in Kentland, Indiana. At that time, Tom offered me a job to help manage the company. After completing my degree in Civil Engineering at Purdue, I'd left the area to build power plants. Excited to get back into the family business, I accepted.

Town & Country operated the Kentland plant from 1993 through 2000 and partnered with Milestone Contractors to perform several Indiana Department of Transportation projects.

In 1999, Town & Country decided it was a good time to purchase industrial property in DeMotte, Indiana to set up shop. Town & Country also purchased another used asphalt plant in 1999. With great effort and resilience, Town & Country opened up shop in DeMotte in 2000. Compared to leasing property, owning property was a nice change of pace.



Pictured left to right: Dan Urbano, Plant Manager; Eric Urbano, Assistant Plant Operator; Mike Urbano, Personnel Director and Roney Urbano, V.P./General Manager.

The new millennium brought much work in residential development for Town & Country, as Jasper County was in the state's top 5 growing counties almost every year.

Sadly, Tom Burns, our founder and father, passed away in 2006.

Looking toward the future, the five Urbano brothers discussed becoming more competitive in the marketplace. Town & Country was manufacturing hot mix asphalt with 1960s technology. With volatile oil and gas markets, we realized that we would either need to get 21st century technology or be passed by competitors.

The family agreed to purchase a new asphalt plant in 2008. It was by far the company's largest investment and the first new plant in 24 years of business. The plant became operational in 2009. Town & Country also has a state-of-the-art asphalt mix design and testing lab.

Today, Town & Country employs over 30 men and women, with a fleet of ten dump trucks and over \$2 million in paving equipment. They are proud members of IUOE Local 150, Teamsters Local 135, and Laborers Locals 41 and 81.

It's hard to imagine removing a driveway with a pick and sledge hammer as we did 25 years ago. Today, it takes over \$1 million worth of equipment.

Many people are completely amazed at how five brothers co-exist in a single business. The answer is easy. I tell them, "I know how, our mother." ■

