

Making Its Mark

Superior Concrete Puts Stamp On Mall, Donnelley

By **BETTY SKEENS**

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Work on Valley Mall and on the R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. plant in Harrisonburg helped build the reputation of Superior Concrete Inc. of Harrisonburg.

Smaller projects throughout the area also bear the company's mark, said Lawrence Wilt, owner and president.

Superior Concrete has served retail stores, fast food restaurants and residential projects from Weyers Cave to Edinburg, as far west as Sugar Grove and Baker, W.Va., and in eastern Page County, Wilt said.

As a supplier of construction material, the company's fate is tied to that of the building industry, he said. "Over the years, I have seen recessions and slowdowns in the economy. They've come and gone, and we really didn't know much about it here in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County."

But a slowdown in residential construction is beginning to take its toll, he said. "The past 12 months (have been) the worst we've seen in some time for single-family dwellings," he said. "We've been involved in several townhouse condominium projects around town, but that market is running down too."

The weather has slowed business more than the economy, he said. "December and January have been unusually wet months,



Lawrence Wilt



but we haul concrete about every day," he said. "It takes an extremely bad day — a downpour of rain, deep snow or zero temperatures — to completely stop us."

Superior Concrete was founded in the early 1950s by Paul Hart-

man and Glendon Shank. Wilt said. In the early 1970s, William Schwartz bought the company along with Betts and Frazier Ready Mix. He consolidated the companies under the name "Superior Concrete." The company's general office was on South High Street in Harrisonburg. The company office moved to Country Club Road in 1980.

Massaponax Holding Corp. of Fredericksburg bought the company in 1979. Wilt took ownership in 1982, making it a family business. His son, Tony, is vice president and general manager. Wilt's wife, Linda, is secretary-treasurer. Kim Kiehl serves as treasurer and office manager.

The company has 25 employees and an annual payroll of \$625,000, he said.

"I think the company will continue to grow," Wilt said. "The area is growing. Harrisonburg and Rockingham County continue to attract interest. We're a rural area with all the conveniences that people need. I think this slump will be short-term. By the end of the year, we ought to be off and going again. We're planning to grow with the area."

Superior Concrete donates services to a number of local charitable organizations and has contributed materials for a number of ramps for the handicapped. "We feel the Lord has blessed us, and we try to give it back," Wilt said.



News-Record Photo by Cathy Kushner

A truck loads up at Superior Concrete.