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J. TROPEANO, INC.

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growth to family company
in North Andover



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Vice President of Operations Dailyn Sullivan,
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The evolution of construction companies is a reflection of decisions made to adapt to customers' needs. In family businesses, those changes also serve as a reminder of the mark that each generation leaves throughout the years.

When one looks back at the history of North Andover's J. Tropeano, Inc., the chapter that its third generation is now writing may shape up as one of the firm's most exciting.

When returning to the company several years ago, brothers T.J. and David Tanner, along with their sister, Dailyn Sullivan, brought an energy that has led to the most aggressive growth in the company's 34-year history.

(L-R) Estimator/Co-Owner Tim Tanner, Vice President of Operations Dailyn Sullivan, Owner Louisa Tanner and Fleet Manager T.J. Tanner operate J. Tropeano, Inc., which is in its third generation.



"My grandfather, James Tropeano, started the original company when he was about my age, and several years later, along with my parents, incorporated the business," explained T.J., who is Fleet Manager. "I worked here in the summers and after school growing up, but moved away once I graduated. When my sister, Dailyn, was set to become the Vice President of Operations, I decided to return as well. From there, the growth started. We've jumped from an operation with six employees and about \$3 million in contracts, to one with more than 40 employees and close to \$22 million in projects."

Most of J. Tropeano's ledger is filled with Massachusetts Department of Transportation projects. A typical job for the company, which is a Certified Women Owned Business via Louisa Tanner's ownership, involves road reconstruction and requires removal of the existing roadway; installing drainage, curbs and sidewalks; and realigning and repaving the new road.

While the firm is thriving with its third generation, the connections to its roots are still apparent. The siblings' father, Tim, handles estimating duties and their mother, Louisa, continues to manage the company.

"My siblings and I are involved in the day-to-day operations, but mom and dad still have important roles," said T.J. "This company is in our family's blood, and we take great pride in what we have accomplished throughout the years. It's a true family business."



Operator Mike Weymouth uses a Volvo ECR235D excavator to load a truck on the Bedford Safe Routes to School in Billerica, Mass.

Youth movement

With as many as 10 jobsites active at once, building a solid workforce has been crucial for J. Tropeano's growth. That's why it takes measures to attract – and maintain – top talent. "We're committed to finding and hiring long-term employees, because we are building for the future," said T.J.

"We do a variety of little things that add up to make our employees' lives easier," noted T.J. "We keep our equipment fleet stocked with newer machines. I think our employees appreciate that. We want them to be happy, because they're a huge part of our success."

T.J. (34), Dailyn (32) and David (30) are all classified as millennials, their parents are a little more 'old school.' The company's other employees also cover the entire age spectrum, blending experience with new blood. The infusion of a younger generation has prompted the company to seek the latest in technology to increase efficiency. To track jobsite progress and help with estimating, foremen and supervisors enter daily notes into Bid2Win software, which provides a clear picture of what the company accomplishes each day.

"The Bid2Win program has been great for us because it ties everything together in one location," explained T.J. "At any point, management can see how a job is progressing. It's certainly helped us track and quantify



J. Tropeano, Inc. Operator Jimmy Gorton hauls a load of rock with a Volvo L90G wheel loader. Volvo wheel loaders are a favorite of the company's operators for their comfortable cabs and excellent visibility.



progress and then bid projects better by attaching a cost to all aspects of our services."

J. Tropeano's equipment fleet has benefited from technology upgrades as well. The firm looks forward to installing Leica GPS systems on its Volvo machines and soon plans to take advantage of Volvo's Dig Assist product. (See related article.)

Volvo and Woodco advantage

A flourishing business requires an equipment fleet that can be fired up in the

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'Employees are comfortable in Volvos'

... continued

morning and continue to produce all day. That's why nearly half of J. Tropeano's fleet is comprised of Volvo equipment from Woodco Machinery and Sales Rep Kerry Causer.

The company's go-to Volvo machines are L70F and L90G wheel loaders for their ease of use and visibility.

"We love our Volvo loaders, nobody beats them," stated T.J. "They are rugged, well-built machines. The boom design is fantastic, and the cab provides amazing visibility. We can sit back in the seat and see to the tips of the forks at road-trailer height. They are the only machines we've owned where that is possible.

(L-R) Fleet Manager T.J. Tanner and J. Tropeano Owner Louisa Tanner call on Woodco Machinery and Sales Rep Kerry Causer for all of their Volvo service and sales needs.



T.J. Tanner, Fleet Manager for J. Tropeano, uses a Volvo SD45 roller on a project in Billerica, Mass.



"They're such comfortable machines to operate," he added. "Our operators don't want to run anything else. They push hard and dig anything – Volvo loaders do everything we need them to."

Volvo excavators are also popular among J. Tropeano's operators as its ECR145C, ECR235C and ECR235D models have won over even the company's toughest critics.

"We have an operator who only wanted to run another brand and was pretty adamant about it," joked T.J. "When we were looking to add a new excavator two years ago, we brought in several machines for demos. After running the Volvo ECR235C, he changed his tune. Now, he doesn't want to run anything but Volvo."

T.J. says the Volvo excavators are a staple of the fleet because of their tight and responsive hydraulics as well as excellent visibility. Operator comfort is also an important factor, and he says the Volvo cabs are the best in the industry.

"The bottom line is that a comfortable operator is more productive, and our employees are comfortable in Volvos," said T.J. "They're the ones who spend an entire day in them, so we really value their feedback. They love the Volvos, and that's all we need to hear."

Louisa and T.J. believe the service and support they receive from Woodco is just as solid as the Volvo machinery it sells. "We consider Woodco a strategic partner in our business. They've been great to us, and it's a relationship we really appreciate," said T.J. "I know I can call Woodco and someone will take care of us. That's very important."

The next chapter

Recent years have been anything but ordinary for J. Tropeano. With T.J., Dailyn and David joining the fold and growth occurring at nearly 8 percent annually, the family-owned business has enjoyed the ride.

"The past several years have been a lot of fun and very positive for the business," T.J. reflected. "I think we are at a good place now, and the pieces are there for continued success." ■