

CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR FINALIST

CLEAR DIVISION OF WORK

Jeff took an initial business step, starting Jeff Green Construction in 1997. He and wife Karen then switched their corporate identity to Akeff Construction Services in 2002. The unusual name is a combination of both of their first names – but because they wanted to come first in the phone book, the “k” and “a” in Karen’s name were switched.

The couple has a clear division of work: Jeff is all field – including the estimating – and Karen, with a business background, is all office, with a second fulltime job taking care of sons Ethan, 6, and Samuel, 4.

Jeff grew up in the Fort Bragg area, so his work – and work ethic – is well known in the area. Also working in the company’s favor is the isolation of the area, located on the northern California coast, and surrounded by mountains. What the locals call “over the hill” involves navigating a twisting two-lane road leading inland. A non-local contractor has to have plenty of incentive to get labor, materials and equipment in and out.

These factors contribute one aspect of their company most contractors would like to claim: Akeff Construction has a 75-percent bid award rate. “We do whatever we have to do to stay busy here,” Jeff says. That includes demolition, paving, building pads and installing utilities. “You have to be versatile,” Karen says, “and be able to follow a project from start to finish.”

“They’ve come up with creative ideas – stuff that we wouldn’t have thought of – that saved us money,”

Faced with a local recycling requirement, Akeff Construction bought a jaw crusher bucket, capable of crushing concrete, brick, block, asphalt and aggregate in a variety of sizes.

says Abbie Colbert, owner of Pelican Storage in Fort Bragg. Akeff did the footings and foundation on the Colbert’s concrete house.

The company has a 70 percent public/30 percent private mix of work. “I like public work because it’s prevailing wage,” the union contractor says. And by remaining union, Jeff was able to keep and build upon the 15 years he had in the union prior to establishing the corporation.

EXTREME CURIOSITY

Jeff is, as Karen describes him, “an extremely curious person. He’ll spend hours researching things.” Jeff typically scours through trade magazines and Internet sites when on a fact-finding mission.

Because of his interest in all things new, Jeff and Karen frequent equipment shows. In fact, the couple introduced Ethan to construction at an extremely young age – he attended ConExpo-Con/Agg when he was one week old.

Although the 25,000-population area they’re in can limit choices, it also offers opportunities. When Fort Bragg and Mendocino County mandated asphalt and concrete recycling, Jeff started researching an economical way both to take care of his own jobsite materials and offer the service to others. He leased two acres of industrial-zoned land (a rarity in the area) and purchased a jaw crushing excavator attachment – one he saw at ConExpo-Con/Agg. Not only does it give him the ability to recycle, it provides winter work during the area’s rainy season.

AUCTION BUYS

Jeff buys most of his machines at auction, and uses the Internet auction services on a regular basis. “I really like it,” he says. “It’s user friendly and it’s a good way to sell equipment. If you go to live auctions, a lot of times you don’t know much about the equipment, even looking at it. The

