

'Things are changing' Engineering firm broadens scope of its work

By MIKE REUTHER

For many businesses, diversification is the key to remaining competitive. Larson Design Group, Williamsport, for example, has long been a road and bridge design engineering firm.

Slowly, but surely, however, it has broadened into other areas as well, according to company officials.

"As the organization continues to grow, things are changing," CEO Keith Kuzio said. Kuzio, who recently celebrated his 25th year with the company, has seen some of those changes. He's proud of the fact that LDG has played a big part in the state's bridge replacement project. Of the 538 bridges across Pennsylvania targeted for the work, the local company has served as a primary subconsultant for design work for 58 of them. LDG has consulted on inspection of many bridges across the region too.

"Bridge inspection has grown," Kuzio said. "We have been doing bridge inspection work for 25 years."

The company is developing a program with Carnegie Mellon University to use drone technology for bridge inspection design work. Locally, the company has been involved with design of the \$700 million Central Susquehanna Valley Thruway now under construction near Shamokin Dam.

There was also LDG's work in the Logger's Landing project at BB&T Ballpark at Historic Bowman Field as well as preparing the stadium for the Major League Little League Classic game in August.

What many people may not realize is the company's involvement in various other infrastructure and building projects. "We are doing sign structure inspections on roads," Kuzio said.

Most recently, LDG inspectors discovered a crack in a sign along Interstate 81 that posed a potential danger to motorists.

There's also the company's work with compressed natural gas facility infrastructure, particularly involving bus transit stations across the state, including in Williamsport. Kuzio noted that the CNG work involves site permitting, engineering and building codes.



Keith Kuzio, president and CEO, left; Brenda Nichols, chief financial officer, center; and Mark Miner, director of corporate communications, right; of the Larson Design Group.

Engineering and design of retail and government buildings represents yet another area in which the company has become increasingly involved.

Kuzio noted he was happy with the company having recently landed its first federal contract to work with contractors in the design of a post office in Florida. "We never could compete in that (federal) market," he said.

LDG also partnered with Cambridge Companies to capture the Engineering-News Record Best Project Award for the Southern Nevada Recycling Center, the single largest single-stream recycling facility in the U.S.

Kuzio said taking on different types of work is an approach that company founder Ken Larson would support.

"Ken Larson said don't always put your eggs in one basket," he said. "In this day and age you can't always be comfortable because technology is always changing."

Kuzio noted that while the company has not recently added to its employee base, it has extended the footprint of its work geographically.

LDG has 11 offices, including two in New York, one in Ohio and one in West Virginia. Of the company's 284 employees, about 170 are in Williamsport.

Local PennDOT Region 3 remains its principal area for bridge and highway work, according to Kuzio.

"In reality, we are working in every PennDOT district," he said.

Kuzio noted LDG remains a employee-owned company.

"Sixty-five percent of the company's ownership is held by all the employees," he said. "It makes them vested in the success of the business."

The company has been named by Zweig White among the 2017 Best Firms to Work For. VMSD magazine named LDG a Top 25 International Retail Design Firm.