

Opening up doors



H&H Door employees pose under the company's new sign.

Relationships from start to finish are what **H&H Door** in Victoria is all about, according to co-owner **Chase Stanzel**.

"We take a very innovative approach to business," he says. "We do a lot of work with the general contractor and also the end user."

The company was founded more than 35 years ago by **Rick Huegele** as H&H Overhead Door. It quickly expanded into providing doors, frames, hardware, overhead doors, access control, division 10 products and related equipment, primarily to the commercial and industrial markets.

Stanzel came in as a partner about a year ago. Both owners have degrees in construction science from Texas A&M University.

"I've always been interested in entrepreneurship," Stanzel says. "Rick was starting to think about succession planning."

The company split into two divisions,

H&H Overhead Doors and H&H Doors and Hardware, with both operating under the same umbrella. About 90 percent of the business is commercial.

"We are considered a total openings solution company, and more importantly, a total solutions company," Stanzel said.

Currently, there are 35 employees, and with the rapid growth in Victoria and surrounding areas, Stanzel says they have openings.

"We range from Waco to the border and are in Oklahoma and Louisiana, as well," he says.

He describes the company's culture as "extremely collegial."

"We have a perfect blend of veterans and young energy," he said. "Rick has built a great team."

Employees take part in activities such as hunts, fishing trips and more.

"Our customer service is relentless," Stanzel said. "We consider ourselves service first and then distributor." -cw

One stop shop



Some of the crew at ELCO gather for a picture under a blue, Rio Grande Valley sky.

Frank Garcia came up in the electrical business in his father's shop in Edinburg, but it didn't take long for the young entrepreneur to set off on his own.

At the age of 19, Garcia branched out from the family business with a desire to build something bigger. He started with Frank's AC & Electric in 1996, but in February 2013, renamed his growing business as **Electro Cooling Service dba ELCO**. The company provides electrical, air conditioning, crane and bucket work.

"I wanted to get into bucket and crane. We got tired of the crane companies charging too much and then never showing up, so I went and bought my own," he laughs.

Now, ELCO is a one-stop shop, according to Garcia, where customers can hire one company to do what would normally take three companies.

His customer policy is simple.

"Give good work to our customers at a decent price," he says.

With nine employees, many of them long-term, Garcia estimates that his business is comprised of 75 percent commercial and 25 percent residential.

He attributes the retention of employees to the variety of work - plus some perks.

The staff also takes time to participate in fishing tournaments and go hunting.

"We trade out work for excursions and then give them to the employees," he said.

His advice to someone thinking about this line of work is to be ready to be in it for the long haul.

"It takes a lot of dedication and you must have a really good attitude towards people," he says.

Frank is married to Monica and he has two sons. One of those, Frankie, 14, is already spending summers working in the shop - and plans to make it a third generation career. -cw

Got you covered

Karen and Gerald Simpson started **Carpet Express** in Pharr in 1991, next door to Gerald's mother's store, Wallpaper Express. By 1996, they had outgrown that location and moved to a much larger facility.

The company currently has six staff and six to eight subcontractor crews. Karen Simpson says their business is 60 percent residential and 40 percent commercial.

"We are tremendously customer oriented," she says. "We built our business from referrals. We pride ourselves on customer service so we will have repeat customers."

The Simpsons consider their employees family and their subs and vendor sales staff extended family. Each year, a huge Thanksgiving luncheon is put on for everybody. The regular employees



L-R: Rosie Castaneda, Sue Ramirez and Karen and Gerald Simpson

also have a Christmas luncheon.

Carpet Express carries Shaw Indus-

tries and is a Shaw Design Center - the only one in the Rio Grande Valley.

"We also carry other brands and we are not just carpet," Karen says. The business carries all types of flooring, including tile, hardwood and vinyl.

"We also make custom area rugs," she says, "so if somebody needs a specific size or color."

There are also area rugs in stock.

They also get quite a bit of walk-in traffic and in the back is "Gerald's Bargain Center" - a mainstay in their local advertising.

"Everybody here works together," Karen says. "We all do what it takes to get it done."

Gerald and Karen have been married for 26 years and have two children. Aubrey, 24, is in Houston and Travis, 21, is a senior at Texas A&M, where he is in the Corps of Cadets. Future plans may include joining the U.S. Air Force. -cw



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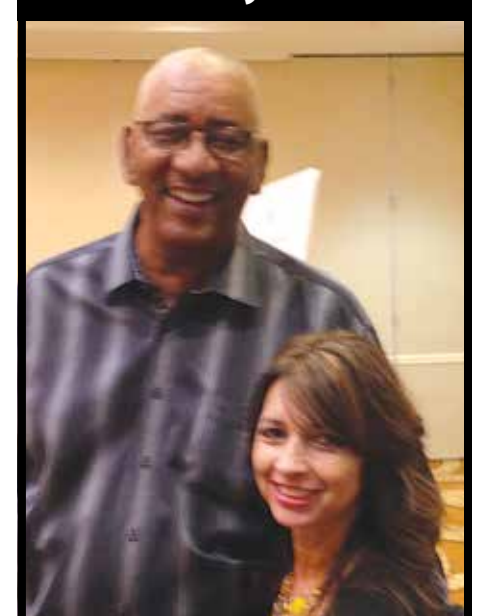
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Submitted to Construction News

He's really that tall



Debbie Schibi, executive director for South Texas Associated General Contractors (AGC) met up with former San Antonio Spurs player, George "The Iceman" Gervin at the Construction Leadership Conference Development Conference in San Antonio. -cw