

This month's Business of the Month spotlight shines on Penn Big Bed Slate Co., Inc. located at 8450 Brown Street, PO Box 184, Slatington (AKA - Slatedale) with another location in Penn Argyl, Pa. The management team includes: Peter J. Papay Sr., Pres.; Peter J. Papay Jr., Quarry Supervisor; Erik Eitner Office & General Manager, John Dally Jr. and General Manager at Dally Division in Pen Argyl

Per Pete, "We are unique in several ways. We are the last working slate quarry in Pa. We have survived four generations. We make slate products mined and manufactured here in Lehigh County and Northampton County. We ship all over the United States and North America. At one time, there were over 160 quarries operating in our Slate District". The company's many products include: Roofing Slate, Floor Tile, Window sills, Treads and Risers, Fire Place surrounds, Mantels, Counter Tops, Vanity Tops, Blackboards, Stepping Stones, Craft Slate and Slate for Turkey Calls and many other Slate items.

The business was started in 1934. Pete's grandfather Jake Papay and his son in law Steve Babyak along with Jake's 4 sons, John, Tom, Steve and Mike Papay, decided to "go on their own." Jake, Steve Babyak and John Papay had the experience from working in other quarries. They started by paying royalty to work quarries that were owned by other families. When they had enough "money, manpower and guts", they bought one of the first quarry sites which had been opened in 1845. It is where they are today -in Slatedale. They bought it from the Shenton family. Labarr and Shenton were two of the early quarry men that picked Slatedale to be "Home".

Over the years, the company has supplied many jobs with our "Pa.Gray Slate ". You can say that part of the company is in many schools and colleges all over the U.S. -from their roof slate, blackboards and floor tile to the lab counter tops, wall cladding, treads and risers, their slate is well known to the architects.

Per Pete "We supplied famous people and institutions-from Jackie Gleeson in the older days to several other well known movie stars of today (we are not allowed to use their names), to well known places like Ellis Island and West Point. If we had degrees from all of them, we would all be Masters and Doctors."

"Our goal is to continue making Slate products with the same quality and hand craftsmanship that made us the last survivor in our State. Our Pennsylvania Big Bed Slate, that we are named for, is prominent and known around the world. Our future plans are to keep at it and continue to look for new ways of quarrying and manufacturing."

The newest product to be marketed is Slate Aggregate. Locally know as crushed stone. Per Pete, "We have been developing a market and I must mention: State Representative Julie Harhart has been going to bat for our small business for several years. Julie has submitted a Resolution that has passed and is now being worked on by Penn Dot. It is an ambitious plan to reuse the old slate piles that are at any location that had a slate quarry. Our mine site in Slatedale has a crushing operation called Slatedale Aggregate Materials. We have already been supplying several municipalities and local contractors. It is our hope that Penn Dot will find our product beneficial to more state wide use. This could help create jobs, cut expense for business in the Lehigh Valley and reclaim land in the process. When this is accomplished, our own State Rep will be able to say she made one of the best real positive improvements for small business and government in our time."

If you are interested in any of the many products offered, please contact Pete at 610-767-4601 Fax: 610-767-9252 Website: www.pennbigbedslate.com . If you are interested in being featured as a business of the month, please contact us at greaternortherlehigh.com