



'Small, but mighty' work done for construction projects
TTL Associates Inc. celebrates 80th anniversary



Among the employees of TTL Associates are, from left: Rossford residents John Rust III, Robert Ruse and CEO Tom Uhler.

By Beth Church

Name a local construction project and chances are TTL Associates Inc. was there from the ground up—literally.

From Bass Pro Shops to FedEx, from the Lucas County arena to the Shops at Fallen Timbers, and from the I-280 bridge to Penta Career Center, the engineering and testing firm has been part of the initial planning.

"We are responsible for the upfront work. We investigate to make sure it's suitable for development, that the environmental and soil conditions for design are workable," explained TTL president and chief operating officer Tom Uhler, P.E., of Rossford.

The company, located on North 12th Street in downtown Toledo, provides a variety of services in environmental and geotechnical engineering, and construction materials quality testing.

Robert Ruse, Ph.D., P.E., of Rossford, serves as vice president of TTL's environmental division. He described their work for developers as "small, but mighty."

"Until we say everything's good to go, they're not going to invest any dollars in it," he said.

This year, TTL Associ-

ates celebrates its 80th anniversary.

In 1927, the company was founded as Toledo Testing Laboratory by Manuel Nardiello. The testing laboratory grew and responded to the market in the 1960s by adding environmental and geotechnical engineering services. In the 1990s, construction services were added and the company changed its name to TolTest.

TTL moved to their current location in 2005, committing themselves to their downtown Toledo location. They built new laboratories, and remodeled new offices on 12th Street, across the street from the original location.

The company expanded its geographical service area by adding offices in Cleveland, Detroit and Plymouth, Michigan, and New Orleans and today has become a \$10 million firm employing more than 100 people.

While TTL employees are often on the scene before construction starts, they also return for the completion.

John Rust III, of Rossford, is the manager of TTL's construction materials testing and inspection division, which assures that construction and buildings are safe and ready for use.

"We make sure the concrete is strong enough in the floor, that the block has the right strength of mortar," he explained. "We inspect the roof, verify it's safe. We're there until they're about ready to open a building."

Mr. Rust, who has nine years experience with TTL, said construction materials testing has been completed for the recent Toledo Hospital addition, Menard's stores, University of Toledo and Bowling Green State University facilities, and more than 50 projects at Toledo Public Schools.

Some of the more public work that the company has done includes preparation for the new I-280 bridge, the Veterans' Glass City Skyway.

TTL performed more than 1,000 soil borings to verify the quality of the river bed on which to place the piers for the new bridge, Mr. Uhler said. The elaborate process required them to place a drill rig in the middle of the Maumee River.

Also, TTL conducts the asbestos surveys and abatement when the old Toledo Public Schools buildings are razed, and they inspect new buildings.

TTL is expanding its work on federal government and military projects.

While working for the

company for 42 years, Mr. Uhler also is a U.S. military veteran and a retiree of the Army Reserves.

Recently, they completed a remediation program in Korea for the U.S. government by surveying military facilities for asbestos. They also performed an environmental survey for the Dayton VA Hospital.

Mr. Uhler started with TTL at the age of 18, working his way through the University of Toledo's engineering school.

One of the major changes he noted from the company's origins was the advancements due to technology.

"Manuel [Nardiello, TTL's founder] was a chemical engineer, but the way we do analysis of chemicals and materials is so different, he wouldn't recognize it," Mr. Uhler said.

Yet despite the new technology, many procedures have remained the same, he added.

Mr. Ruse explained that soil tests conducted in the field or in a lab are identical to those completed 80 years ago.

"It seems so basic, but there's no better way to do it," he said.

TTL has a certified independent construction laboratory on-site for quality construction material testing services for soils, asphalt, concrete, aggregate, floors, foundations, masonry, structural steel and roofs and a certified asbestos testing laboratory.

The emphasis on environmental work was another major change through the years, Mr. Uhler said.

"There's a new awareness of the environment—how we can clean up what's been done in the past, and how what we do affects the environment," he said.

Mr. Ruse added, "Back in the '20s, there was not much consideration of the environment."

Mr. Ruse is a LEAD accredited professional, which enables him to certify buildings as using the newest "green" energy practices.

Throughout the company's history, Mr. Uhler said a mission of community

involvement has always been strong.

TTL employees are involved in a variety of ways in the communities where their offices are located.

"We believe in community—what we can give back is very important to us," Mr. Uhler said.

The company president has an extensive background in community outreach and economic development. In 1998, he was selected as a founding member of the Rossford-Perrysburg Township Port Authority. He also serves on the Lucas County Improvement Corporation and Rossford Public Library boards.

His approach to business is always with a regional perspective.

"We feel this is a region—not a city, town or township—we all have to work together," he said.

"We spend a lot of time trying to attract new business to the region and encourage existing businesses to expand."

Mr. Ruse is a member of the Rossford Planning Commission, serves on the State of Ohio Chamber of Commerce energy and environment committee, and is the president of the Toledo Society of Professional Engineers.

He previously served eight years as the service-safety director for the City of Findlay.

Mr. Rust also serves on several local committees and is a member of EPIC, a subsidiary to the Toledo Chamber of Commerce.

TTL also is involved with the Rotary Foundation and provides funding to charitable foundations through the community service committee.

TTL has made a commitment to help by donating used computers to inner-city schools in Detroit and prepares food baskets and toys for the Reach program in Detroit.

"We're involved in a lot of environmental and construction projects that affect the community. So we believe it's important that our employees are involved where they live and work," Mr. Uhler said.