

“Find a need and fill it” means something more to this recycler

by Jon M. Casey



A load of 304s is headed out as Tom Clark fills an All American Trucking dump truck with material.

For those who use the expression, “Find a need and fill it” as a prescription for success, that motto means several things to Steve Geiger, owner of Geiger Excavating, Inc. At his company’s concrete and asphalt recycling yard located at a former landfill site in Gahanna, OH, Geiger and his staff work together to meet the needs of local contractors with a destination for concrete and asphalt tear out. They also receive unwanted fill dirt and overburden too.

From those materials they provide much needed, site prep materials for back haul to construction jobsites however while that is going on, Geiger uses excess fill dirt that comes into the center, to backfill areas that need attention, part of the site reclamation and development project that is taking place. As some might like to call it, it is a Win Win Win situation!

Geiger said that in his business model, the recycling business ultimately prepares its current location for future sale as commercial property. He noted that their work includes value added benefits like access to rail siding and to roadways that previously did not exist when the property first became a recycling center. More importantly, the greater Columbus area benefits because the real estate

becomes home to future manufacturing facilities, warehousing, sales distribution centers or office park complexes. That benefits the area with jobs and revenues to help fuel future growth.

History and business model

“I decided to go into recycling in 1988 when I bought my first landfill property and a bull dozer while I was still owner/operator of a restaurant in the area,” said Steve as we sat in the company field office. “Several years earlier, I had sold a tool and die business that I had owned and had used some of the proceeds to go into the restaurant business. After a few years of doing that, I needed something more to do. So, I bought available land over on Morrison Road, from the City of Columbus. I bought the land, and then I bought a bulldozer. Not too long after that, I started a recycling business on that site. Today, that property is now an industrial park.” And that is how Geiger’s business model operates.

“That parcel, like this one, was formerly a part of the Claycraft Brick Plant properties in Gahanna. I bought it at a sheriff’s sale with the idea that I might develop it and sell it. At the time, I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but it didn’t take long to find out that there was a need for a recycling center that



In a takeoff of the popular TV series, Geiger’s “Dirt Dynasty” poses for a group photo. Standing L-R: Tom Clark, Van Geiger, Jason Steiner, Windy Geiger-Steiner, Steve Geiger. Front Row: Issac Geiger

Photo supplied by Geiger Excavating

would take dirt, asphalt and concrete material all at the same location.”

“So, we began crushing and screening the material to provide products for site prep work and other jobs that needed recycled aggregates to meet specs,” he said. “Since then, we’ve continued to grow. We sold that first location to a developer in 2008. They turned it into the industrial park that sits alongside I-270.”

We negotiated on this parcel in 2009 and settled on it in 2010. It was still an active landfill at the time, and had been left open for more than 30 years. We finished the reclamation and officially close it in 2010.”

Since then, his crew has been backfilling areas to bring the site up to grade and make it more amenable to potential buyers while they provide the recycling services to local contractors. They have continued to operate their recycling business with the idea that in the next year or two, they will be able to close on the sale of this property and move on to their next location, a site that Steve has had his eye on for the past several months.



Van Geiger dumps a load of 304s into the screen plant where it is screened into 310s, 57s, and 4s.

Geiger from 10



Windy's brother, Van Geiger, oversees production. Today, he is operating filling the screen plant with 304s.

"We offer the ability to not only sell a customer a parcel of land when the property is ready to sell, but we can also provide the materials that the contractors might need to do the site prep work," Steve said. "Currently, we do our recycling here at the same time that we prepare the site for future sale to a business or manufacturer who is looking for a location of this size; one with rail, highway and air access (this site is within five miles of Port Columbus International Airport). We have a potential buyer in the wings and we are continuing to upgrade the property with them in mind," he said.

Daily Operations

Windy Geiger-Steiner, said they run a full recycling landfill which means that they are allowed to charge tipping fees for bringing in dirt and tear out asphalt and concrete material. "This is our third project of its kind," she said. "We have produced about one million yards of dirt backfill here and have about a half million yards to go to complete what we have planned for this site. During this time, we do the recycling as well. We hope to be completed here in the next couple of years."

As part of what they do here, they crush tear out



Steve Geiger explains how he upgrades the landfill property as he prepares it for future commercial development.

asphalt and concrete, turning it into a full range of recycled gravel products. These include 57s, 310A, 304s, 2s and 4s. In asphalt they also produce 304s, 2s and a 4-inch minus crusher run product. All their material is approved by the City of Columbus and their recycled material has been used at the Port Authority, which Windy notes, was a first for recyclers. Fill dirt is either sold or used for reclamation.

"Not many recyclers do a secondary screening of recycled aggregate," she said. "This gives us a better market for the 57s and 4s line. Our concrete contractors like that so they bring in their concrete tear out and they can reuse the 57s under their new concrete pour."

"We crush with a 4043T Screen Machine Impactor then screen the initial product into 2s and 304s with a Powerscreen 510. Then, as we need it, we do a secondary screening of the 304s. We turn that into 57s, 310s and 4s, also with a Powerscreen unit."

Windy said they currently employ six, mostly family members. "That includes my husband Jason Steiner, my brother Van Geiger, Isaac Geiger and Tom Clark, an equipment operator. We recently added Carrie Williams, who works in the office and serves as weigh master as well," she said.

She said that they are busier than ever with more than 300 loads of material expected to come in on this day alone. These loads will include dirt, concrete and asphalt, with most of the fill dirt headed to a ravine at the far end of the property, where backfilling it taking place. "We will even work on Saturdays



Windy Geiger-Steiner has worked at her father's business since she was a youngster.

if our customers need to bring in the material or need the crushed aggregate," added Steve.

With Geiger's current formula for success clearly on track, there is no doubt about it. Geiger Excavating, Inc. has "Found a need and filled it!" For more information about Geiger Excavating, Inc. contact them at 614-373-7526 or online at geigerexcavatinginc.com.



This industrial park alongside Interstate 270 in the greater Columbus, OH area, is a former site of a reclaimed landfill where Geiger did business with his previous recycling landfill operation.



One of the 100 plus loads of asphalt tear out that was expected to be brought in on the day of our visit, arrives at the top of this stockpile of material and is dumped in a safe location.