
**BUILDING
A
DREAM**

THE STORY OF DANELLA COMPANIES, INC.



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By Margaret O. Kirk

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DEDICATION

Building a Dream: The Story of Danella Companies, Inc.
is dedicated to Carmen Danella.



This book is dedicated to my father, Carmen Danella,
who instilled in me at an early age a strong work ethic
and an entrepreneurial spirit. These qualities have
served me well throughout my life.

Thanks, Dad, for giving me my start in life.

*Love,
Jim*



Stamford, Connecticut



Times Square, New York

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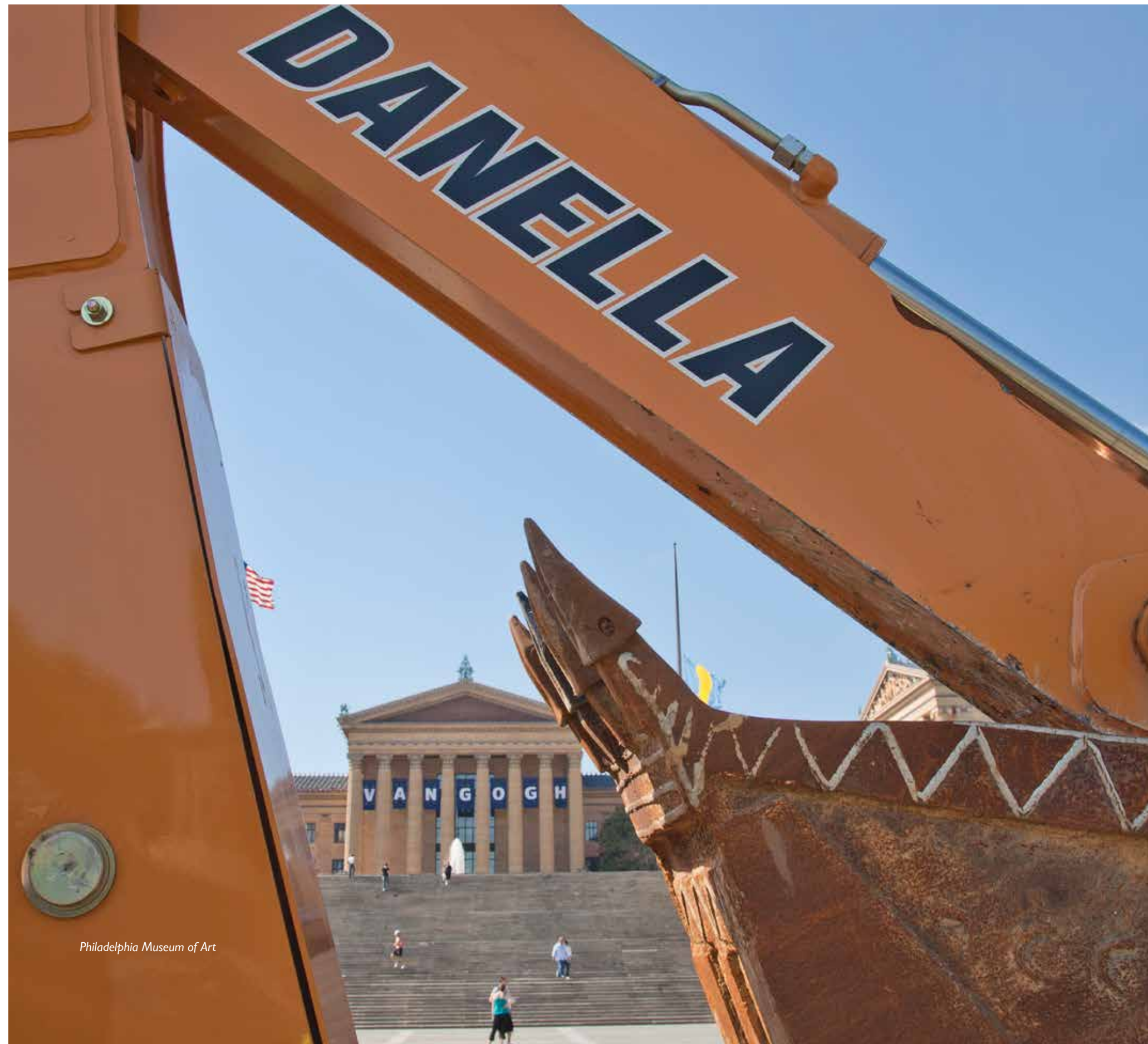
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Philadelphia Museum of Art

INTRODUCTION

In 1972, James D. Danella, a freshly minted graduate of Villanova University's School of Business, bought, with his father, a construction company. Thomas W. Faulkner Jr., Inc. specialized in servicing utility companies in the suburbs of Philadelphia and, at the time of the purchase, had two contracts, together worth about \$1 million a year in sales. One was an infrastructure maintenance contract for Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania in Montgomery County, the other a paving contract for Philadelphia Electric Company in Norristown.

Over the next four decades, Jim Danella transformed Faulkner into a multimillion-dollar utility construction enterprise known as Danella Companies, Inc.—a family of businesses that today provides construction and engineering services to major gas, electric, water, and telecommunications companies throughout the United States, as well as construction equipment rental services to railroads and utility companies nationwide.

Danella Companies has grown to employ in excess of fifteen hundred dedicated workers. It controls and operates thousands of pieces of transportation and on-site equipment, owns a rental fleet of over four thousand vehicles, runs thirty-three construction yards, and works out of nineteen offices, including a forty-thousand-square-foot corporate headquarters in Plymouth Meeting, outside of Philadelphia. Since 1972, Danella has successfully completed a multitude of projects, with individual contracts ranging in value from a thousand dollars to many millions.

And on any given day, on busy city streets or quiet country roads, in the far reaches of a railroad track out west or beside a flowing river on the East Coast, the blue and yellow Danella logo can be seen on crew uniforms and emblazoned on trucks and sophisticated construction equipment—

- In New York City, where Danella Construction of NY, Inc. was selected to

install four main permanent electrical feeds to the World Trade Center Freedom Tower and the primary communications duct banks and manholes for World Trade Center Tower 4 and five thousand feet of thirty-inch steel welded gas main down Madison Avenue.

- In Philadelphia, where Danella Construction Corporation of PA, working in the congested streets of Center City, installs complicated field-cast manholes connected by a twelve-duct conduit structure to help relocate an electrical system vital to the reconstruction of the Fortieth Street Bridge over the Amtrak right-of-way.

“This business is about so much more than digging ditches.”

- In Jupiter, Florida, where Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc. uses uniquely customized equipment to suspend a walkway beneath a bridge to enable workers to replace nuts and bolts, corroded by salt air, at 195 critical locations.



- In Hanover, Maryland, where Danella Line Services Company, Inc. uses its specialized directional bore equipment to complete a duct and fiber installation project for a communications company.
- In Atlanta, Georgia, where Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation works a three-hundred-mile private right-of-way, installing a three-duct communications system alongside an existing, active fiber cable and an abandoned coaxial cable.
- In Aurora, Colorado, where every day Danella Rental Systems, Inc. provides a fleet of custom-designed heavy-duty hi-rail trucks and other hi-rail equipment to some of the nation's largest railroad and transit operators.

This is the history of Danella Companies, Inc., the narrative of how a small local enterprise with

just two contracts grew into a multimillion-dollar national family of firms, with loyal customers, long-term contracts, and well-deserved name recognition coast to coast. It is the story of growth driven by an owner's quest to succeed, a savvy and devoted management team with a gift for being in the right place at the right time, and a talented workforce dedicated to a mission that requires nothing less than "Pride in Everything We Do®." It is also a collection of personal stories laced with pride, humanity, and humor, all contributing to the evolution of a sophisticated, modern company built on visionary leadership and the skilled hard work of dedicated construction crews on the job every day.

Having celebrated his company's fortieth anniversary in 2012, Jim Danella is understandably proud of its record of success and growth. He never fails to point out that, after four decades of continuous service, Danella still does business with its original customers from 1972: PECO (formerly Philadelphia Electric Company) and Verizon (formerly Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania).

The longevity of those original relationships says a lot about how Danella Companies has survived and thrived in an extremely competitive business environment over four decades, which have witnessed four recessions and profound transformations in both technology and the regulatory environment. For forty years, the company has delivered loyalty, an exacting commitment, unwavering quality, consistent innovation, and pride in everything its people do.

In 1972, James D. Danella was a young, untested college graduate who wanted to run his own company. Today, he is a seasoned and astute businessman who has earned the respect and admiration of his employees and his industry peers. "This business," he explains in the same soft-spoken, no-nonsense tone he uses with employees and customers alike, "is about so much more than digging ditches." **DC**



New York City

DANELLA COMPANIES



James D. Danella
Chairman & CEO, Danella Companies, Inc.



Dennis Daly
President & CFO
Danella Companies, Inc.



John Bass
Vice President
Construction
Danella Companies, Inc.

The executive leadership at Danella Companies is a deep and highly experienced bench. Under the direction of these managers, Danella Companies has been able to expand with confidence into different markets and territories. They work with autonomy on a day-to-day basis, but always with the best interests of Danella Companies, its employees, and, most of all, its customers in mind.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



Paul Barents
Vice President
Danella Rental Systems, Inc.
Plymouth Meeting, PA



Joe Hemple
President
Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc.
Melbourne, FL



Tom Brady
Vice President
Danella Engineering & Construction Corporation
& Danella Integrated Solutions
Plymouth Meeting, PA



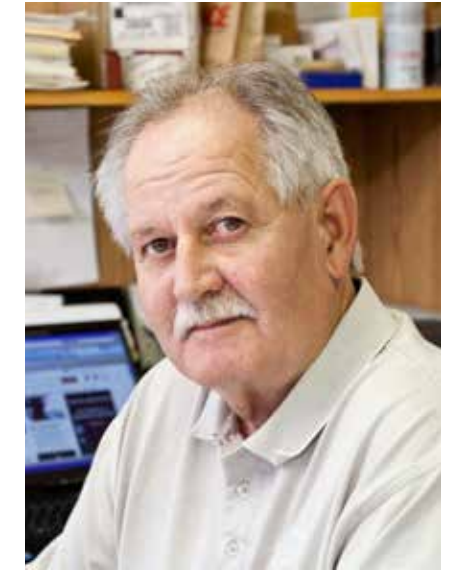
Price Jackson
President
J. Daniel & Company, Inc.
Loveland, OH



Bob Brust
Vice President
Danella Line Services Company, Inc.
Plymouth Meeting, PA



Peter Mazzari
Vice President
Danella Construction of NY, Inc.
Armonk, NY



Rick Duich
Vice President
Danella Atlantic Corporation
Laurel, MD



Rich Neas
Vice President
Danella Construction Corporation of PA
Plymouth Meeting, PA



Pipeline project for Transco, 1991

How It Grew

1972–2012

James D. Danella, twenty-three, newly graduated from Villanova University with a major in business, had always dreamed of running a successful company. May 5, 1972, was the day the dream was realized. Forty years later, Jim Danella admits that it turned out to be “one of the scariest days of my life.”

That Friday morning, Danella, with the help of his father, purchased Thomas W. Faulkner Jr., Inc., a utility construction company based in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Jim’s father, Carmen, who ran a successful trucking business on the outskirts of Philadelphia, negotiated the \$1.5 million deal, which required a \$1 million loan from the previous owner and a five-hundred-thousand-dollar loan from what was then Continental Bank. About four in the afternoon, after the deal was sealed, the Danellas, son and father, accompanied the now former owner to meet the staff at Faulkner’s office on Evergreen Avenue. Mr. Faulkner was, by all accounts, a “difficult” businessman, but the

“Oh, my God. What am I going to do now?”

Danellas had no way of knowing, when they opened the office door, that Faulkner had promised many times that he would give his current employees a chance to buy the company if he ever decided to sell. Obviously, he had not kept that promise, and the sale of his company touched off an explosion among his upper management.

“We walked in and announced to everyone that we were the new owners,” Danella recalls. There was a notable absence of applause, accompanied by a flurry of activity. Within thirty minutes, the



First backhoe ever owned—Case 580CK, early 1970s.

superintendent, the dispatcher, the assistant superintendent, and the head bookkeeper, pretty much all of management, had packed up their files and quit, leaving Jim Danella pressed up flat against the hallway wall as they squeezed

past him toward the exit, cardboard boxes in hand.

“Mr. Faulkner tried arguing with them,” Danella vividly remembers, “shouting at them that the information had to stay in the office and that everything belonged to the company. But they said, ‘No, it’s our private information,’ and they all went out the door.”

In the span of a half-hour, the dream had turned into a nightmare. “My father looked at me and said, ‘I am in the trucking business. And my name is on the line for this. You have one year to make it work. And if it doesn’t work, you get me out of it.’ And I’m standing there thinking, *Oh, my God, what am I going to do now?*”

“You Are Going to Need Some Help”

The day Danella bought Faulkner, it had two contracts: an infrastructure maintenance contract with a telephone company then known as Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania, in Montgomery County, and a paving contract for a utility company called Philadelphia Electric Company, in Norristown. Going in, Jim Danella had judged those contracts to be a good start. He would discover, however, that the scope of Faulkner’s business under those contracts was hardly as extensive as the previous owner claimed. Fortunately, that revelation did not come immediately (and when it did, Danella was able to renegotiate the sale price). Instead, the only problem he faced that first Saturday morning was being the

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“They just don’t build conduit structures like that anymore.”
—Jim Danella

Norristown, Pennsylvania, 1980

JAMES D. DANELLA

James D. Danella always dreamed about owning a business and being a successful businessman. The only child of Carmen and Mary Danella, he grew up in the Philadelphia suburb of Conshohocken, where both parents instilled a work ethic in their son from an early age. He had a paper route, and he organized friends to shovel snow in the winter. In the summers, he was up every morning at seven, ready to weed the gardens, sweep the sidewalks, and finish any chore his mother or father assigned before noon rolled around and he was allowed to play. And every Saturday, no matter the season, he shined all of his father's shoes.

By all accounts, Carmen Danella was an extremely successful businessman who worked long hours at his trucking business. He could be a very difficult man to work for—strong, determined, uncompromising, the stereotype of a stubborn Old World Italian, who nevertheless always wanted what he thought was best for his family. For family, friends, and employees, his nickname said it all: Carmen “The Bull” Danella.

When his only son was in the eighth grade, Carmen Danella told Jim that he was old enough to work three afternoons a week in the family business. “Sweeping the floors, cleaning the men’s room, cleaning mechanics’ tools—anything I could do, I did,” recalls Jim Danella. “I had my little mechanic’s uniform, and I thought I was hot. When I grew older, I worked on the trucks, changed tires, worked as a dispatcher. My father didn’t believe in vacations, and he would play huge mind games with me. When my friends would go play golf on Wednesday, he would say, ‘You stay here and work. At the end of the day, you have more money than they do.’ My dad worked very, very hard all of his life. And he used to say to me, ‘I don’t care what you think of me



Jim Danella, 1993

now. It’s what you think of me when you are thirty-five years old that counts.”

After graduating from Plymouth Whitmarsh High School, Jim attended Malvern Prep for a year before enrolling in Villanova University. He graduated in 1971 with a business degree and a dream—to own his own company. A year later, that dream came true when Carmen Danella arranged, through Continental Bank and the owner of the business, funding for the purchase of the Thomas W. Faulkner Jr. utility construction business.

Paying off the note? That would be entirely Jim’s responsibility.

From 1972 to 2012, Jim Danella successfully grew what had been a \$1-million-a-year business into a multimillion-dollar company of companies, providing construction and engineering services to major telephone, fiber optic, electric, and gas utilities throughout the United States. Added to this was a thriving equipment rental enterprise. To his fifteen hundred employees, Danella projects the same work ethic he learned from his parents, albeit with a kinder, gentler touch than his father was ever known to wield. Jim Danella never bought into his father’s hardnosed philosophy that you had to fire someone at least once a week to keep everyone else in line. And, unlike Carmen Danella, he rarely raises his voice in anger. “He would chew you out royally without raising his voice,” says Paul Rossi, manager of the Danella Used Truck & Equipment Sales lot, “but when you walked out of there, you knew. He could get his point across just fine without raising his voice.”

As CFO Dennis Daly likes to say, “My office has always been within twenty feet of Jim’s office. I probably see him every day. His management style was and is hands off. He doesn’t micromanage. Don’t expect Jim Danella to tell you what to do. And he is somewhat set in his ways in the sense that if it’s not broken, don’t fix it. It has been that way since the beginning.”

John Bass, vice president, construction, joined Danella in 2005 and quickly realized that the company’s foundation is based on “Jim’s drive. Jim is a driven individual. He is a very good and very successful businessman, and he understands what it takes to win a contract. It takes a lot of energy to always be out there, looking for other opportunities. And his employees take that energy that he has and go out and make things happen for him. You’ve probably noticed: People are really loyal to Jim.”

Consider Pete Marone, supervisor and operations manager, Danella Line Services, an employee since 1982. Asked “What did I contribute to the company?” he pauses, searching for just the right words. “Over the years, I’ve done everything that I could possibly do for Jim. Not for me, but for Jim.

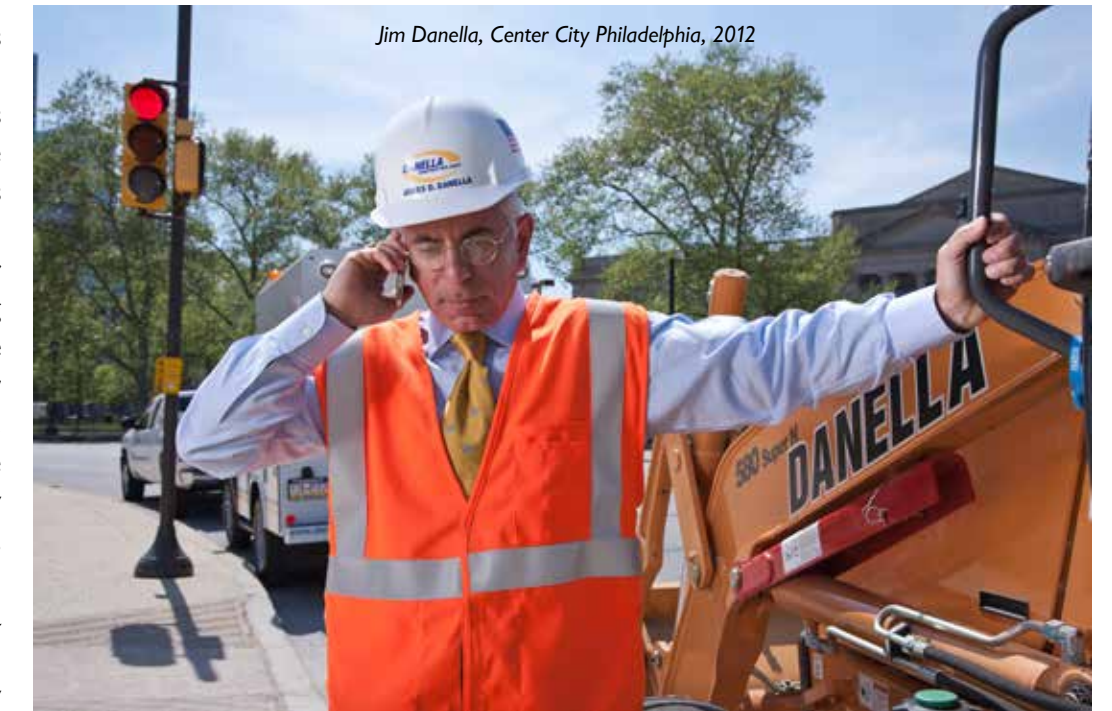
No matter what I was doing, I always had Jim’s and Danella’s best interests at heart.”

Executive assistant Trisha Travis points out that “Jim has surrounded himself with very loyal people, and they have not let him down. I also just think that he takes care of his staff. It’s not always necessarily money—but in the little and big ways he shows he cares about the people who work for him. Regardless of whether they are in the office wearing suits or they are in the field doing manual labor, he cares. He never forgot where he came from, and he lets everyone know that he is always accessible. His line is, ‘I’m just a ditch digger. That’s all I do, I just dig ditches.’ He knows better than anyone that the company is much more than that, but it explains why he can cross between management and the guys in the crew, and they are loyal to him.”

Employees often tell touching stories of how Jim Danella helped them out of a financial or a medical crisis. “In 1996 I needed heart surgery,” Rossi relates. “It was during my physical for the company, and they found a murmur and a few more things that needed to be fixed. My youngest daughter had just started college, so I had to work. I said, ‘Do you mind if I wait four years ‘til she gets out?’ And the doctor just looked at me and said, ‘If this ruptures, you will be dead before you hit the floor.’ I came to Jim Danella and explained the situation, and he handled it. I was out of work for three or four months, and he handled it. That’s the one thing about the man: If you have worked here, and you have done a good job, he takes care of you. I have no complaints about that man whatsoever.”

Away from the business, Jim Danella raised four

Jim Danella, Center City Philadelphia, 2012



children—both sons have worked at the company, and one still does—and he dotes on his grandchildren. When he married his beloved Mary Jo, he also welcomed her daughter into the family. The consummate, multitasking businessman, Danella is also a successful real estate developer, with apartment complexes, hotels, and office buildings throughout Pennsylvania and Florida to prove it. He has served as a member of the boards of Penn Liberty Bank, Villanova University, LaSalle Academy, LaSalle College High School, Mission Kids, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s “Heritage of Faith, Vision of Hope” Campaign. And he still finds some time for golf, cycling, and sporting clays.

With her boss’s diverse interests and keen professional drive, Travis finds every day working for Jim Danella different. “You can’t come to work in the morning with a plan for things to accomplish that day, because it doesn’t happen. You have a five-minute conversation with him and you have three days of work. He gets an idea and expects you to just run with it.”

And while he may continue—stubbornly—to insist that he’s just a ditch digger, those around him beg to differ. “Jim,” says Paul Barents, “is the man with the vision.” **DC**



Mary Jo and Jim, 2006



First rental contract with Philadelphia Electric Company, 1980

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brand-new owner of a utility construction company that had just lost its management team.

Catapulted from college graduate to owner-boss, Danella sat in the office that was now his, cradling his mug of coffee, and asking himself, *Can I do this? How can I do this?*

Into this lonely scene walked Price Jackson, a Faulkner foreman who had refused to join the group that deserted the company. Fresh in Jackson's memory were the disparaging remarks the other Faulkner employees had made after the sale was announced—the heated barbs aimed at Faulkner and his worthless promises and the ugly slurs directed at the new boss with the Italian heritage. For reasons he could never fully explain, Jackson chose to stay with the new owners. He sat down in a chair to the left of his new boss, introduced himself to Danella, and didn't try to sugarcoat the situation.

"Jim, I don't know if you realize this or not, but you are going to need some help."

With that opening, the two men talked. There were about thirty employees left in the company, including the laborers who made up the four to five crews Faulkner dispatched every day to provide maintenance for Bell and paving work for Philadelphia Electric. The newest truck the company owned was a 1968 International, along with a few compressors and pickups. Jackson assured Danella he would come in first thing Monday morning and "set up the board." Danella thanked him.

The "board" showed the crews where to go to work and generally got them started. Today, however, Jim Danella admits, "I didn't have a clue what 'the board' was," adding, "and the dispatcher had walked out, too." But he did have Price Jackson.

"Price and I, from that day on, really worked closely together. He came in on Monday morning and calmed the men down, told them that things were going to be fine, and everyone went to work. He gave me a list of names from the telephone and electric companies and said, 'You call them today, introduce yourself, and make a time to visit them.' As the week went on, Price came to me with another idea. 'You know, Jim, you need a superintendent in the field.' And I turned to him and said, 'That's great, Price. You're the new superintendent.'"

Jackson, who says he "came with the furniture," remembers that Jim indeed knew "nothing at all about the construction business, but he was very sharp and he understood people. He watched everything I did for about two years, and everything everyone else did. He put all of that in his head, and it seemed like he did it overnight. He was like a genius when it came to knowing this business, and he didn't worry about getting dirty. He was out on the jobs with us."

Depleted as the management ranks were, Jackson wasn't the only one who stayed with Danella. A bookkeeper named Chuck Faulkner—the former owner's cousin—stayed, and so did Gina Pierce, a part-time secretary, who became full-time six months later and would remain by Jim Danella's side for the next thirty years. Valuable crew members and laborers decided to keep working for the Danella business, too. And



Renato Mariani

the young owner, who was learning the utility construction business but who already instinctively understood people, soon hired the person he considered "the greatest man who ever lived" to run the warehouse and equipment yard: his uncle, Renato Mariani. The man everyone called "Uncle Renato," or just plain "Unc," gave his nephew the encouragement he needed to believe that everything was going to work out.

It was as simple as it was necessary, "Hey, kid, donna you worry about it. Everything's gonna be okay."

Everything Will Be Okay

Concerned as he was about his new company, Jim Danella nevertheless had a deep reserve of self-confidence to draw on. Having grown up in the trucking business, he felt he knew construction equipment well enough, but when it came to actual construction work, he admitted that he started out knowing very little. That, however, was not what bothered him. "My

whole life has been trial and error," he explains. What's more, he didn't just want to take over Faulkner to maintain the status quo. Survival? He wanted *growth*.

"When I had the opportunity, I put everything else out of my mind and said, 'How do we get to look like other large construction companies? How do I get Danella to look like them?' I took advantage of every opportunity I could to move on from telephone to gas to electric to water."

It would never be easy, and it was nearly all over before it had really begun. The members of the management team who had walked out of Faulkner started their own company, stealing a few foremen from Faulkner and starting rumors on the street that "the kid is not going to last a year," Danella recalls. Then fortune intervened. In a stroke of dumb luck, Faulkner's contract with the telephone company came up for rebid three months after Danella became the new owner. The new boss put in a rebid—and won.

"Maybe," Jim Danella admits today, "I was just too stupid at the time to fully understand what would have happened if we had lost that contract. We were really playing *You Bet Your Life*. But we performed well, and we were fortunate."

As the saying goes, *Fortune favors the brave*. And it also favors the hard workers. Jim Danella's own hard work was soon recognized and appreciated by those who worked for him. Chris Straubel, who first joined the company in 1970 as a laborer for Faulkner, left in 1971 when he was drafted into the military, but two years later, after his hitch, returned to the same company with a new boss. "Right away, there was something different about Jim Danella," recalls Straubel, who would advance through the ranks to become superintendent of Danella Line Services, the position he still holds. "Jim was taking risks and doing different work, not just filling holes and putting down pavement for PECO, but working toward bigger jobs with all of the utilities. Actually, it was kind of impressive. I distinctly remember Jim—we were on Hillcrest and Evergreen in Norristown at the time—coming out to the yard, talking to everyone. We only had five or six crews at the

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“PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE DO®” AND “WORK WITH PRIDE”: SAFETY, HEALTH, AND PROFESSIONALISM AT DANELLA

Orientation to Safety, a video shown to all new Danella employees, begins not with a hired actor but with the chairman and CEO himself. From the lobby of Danella’s headquarters in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, Jim Danella tells incoming hires, “We have a safety program in place designed with one simple goal in mind: to get you home each and every night to your families and loved ones in the same shape you came to work. No injury or accident is acceptable to us. And it should not be to you.”

For Danella Companies, safety is not merely a business decision or a program put in place to meet federal safety requirements. It is a passionate personal value. The firm’s focus on safety and professionalism, sharp and uncompromising, has created a distinctive identity and impressive safety record in the industry.

“We are committed to providing the highest-quality work in a safe environment throughout the utilities industry,” says Peter Mazzari, vice president, Danella Construction of NY, Inc. “We provide the best equipment, materials, training, and supervision to carry out a project with the highest quality and in the safest and most productive manner possible. Safety, quality, and productivity are equal components of the ‘Danella Pride.’”

For years now, Danella has built upon the Zero Incident Philosophy based on the theory that every accident is preventable. Making good on that proposition requires continuous training and unwavering dedication. Danella invests in safety orientations as well as ongoing safety training. Workers are required to wear hard hats, gloves, steel-toed boots, eye protection, and reflective safety vests while on the job. No



New York City

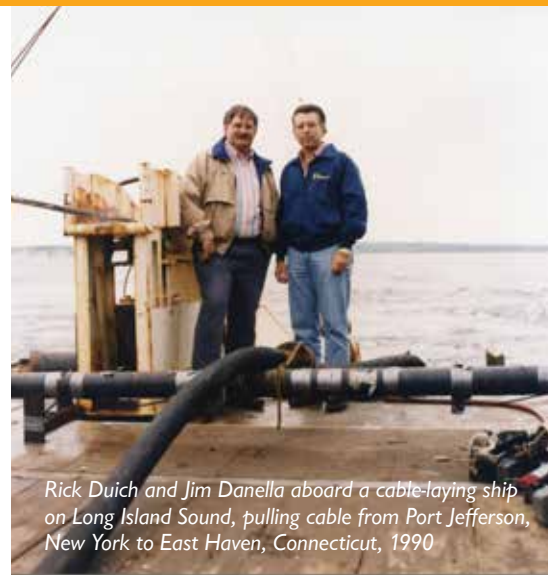
exceptions. In addition, employees attend a ten-hour OSHA training course and receive CPR training. Throughout the work yard at the Plymouth Meeting headquarters, where crews gather every morning to pick up equipment, banners and posters broadcast the message that Danella is serious when it comes to safety. There’s “Safety First,” of course, but it also gets very personal, “Work Safe—Your Family Depends on It.”

Crews take the message everywhere they go. Their Danella T-shirts are emblazoned with “*The Safe Way Is the Right Way.*”

The reams of federal safety regulations that have been piling up ever since the 1971 passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) have put many a construction CEO, manager, and foreman on edge. Not so at today’s Danella. The company not only demands 100 percent OSHA compliance, it works to elevate compliance to a proud way of professional conduct. Of course, this is good business. The costs of OSHA fines and sanctions, of civil liability, and of employee health insurance are powerful incentives to safety. But the greatest incentive is purely human. No job is worth an injury—or worse.

Paul Barents, vice president, Danella Rental Systems, admits that the company grew into this realization. “Today we have a reputation for being a safe company,” he explains, “but I will say, that wasn’t always the case. Way back in the seventies, eighties, and early nineties, it was, ‘Get the job done and it doesn’t matter how you do it.’ Today we say, ‘Whatever it takes to get the job done in a safe, professional manner.’”

Not that one doesn’t sometimes detect a certain nostalgia from long-term employees, who recall the formative years when macho and bravado dominated the work sites and the equipment yards. When Danella veterans allude to the era “when men were men,” it’s really Danella-speak for carrying not one but two ninety-four-pound bags of cement on your back without (of course!) wearing a back belt lumbar support. Or climbing into a trench with a rope tied around your ankle as a “security” precaution. Or driving trucks that exceed weight limits for materials. Or living to tell the tale of the time you punched a hole in your foot with a jackhammer because you didn’t bother with steel-toe boots. Or working



Rick Duich and Jim Danella aboard a cable-laying ship on Long Island Sound, pulling cable from Port Jefferson, New York to East Haven, Connecticut, 1990

way past dark to get a job done—even if you didn’t have anything like proper lighting. And who at Danella didn’t pry open a manhole cover with their bare hands, if only for the sake of bragging about it?

Those days are gone. And even the most nostalgic of longtimers admit that injury was not what was good about “the good old days.” Those same veteran employees are proud of Danella work sites today. From New York to Philadelphia to Virginia to Florida and back, Danella’s many projects reveal the uncompromising lengths to which company crews go to create safe work environments. State-of-the-art work lighting systems, special ladders, carefully wrapped steam pipes, perfectly maintained safety harnesses, meticulously secured walls inside deep trenches and manholes, designated road-crew safety teams, extremely organized work sites, and always the most up-to-date and safest equipment—today, these are everywhere Danella works.

“We’ve had people come into our company and say, ‘Gee, I never worked for a company like this,’” says Barents. “Obviously, we have to get the work done in the field. You have to get into that trench. But we have employees compliment us on our safety emphasis after they come to Danella, and that is nice to hear.”

Being safe is simply the right thing to do, of course, but Danella’s reputation for safety has also been very good for business. “Besides the fact that we are in a situation to control workers’ comp and insurance costs, our customers recognize and appreciate our ability to run a safe job site,” said John Bass, vice president, construction. “We have won some contracts with new customers because we could bring them in and show them what we do and how we work.”



Tim Sykes, DCC-PA, hired 1993

Company division leaders have contributed to Danella’s safety goals by taking the charge to create their own safety projects. Peter Mazzari, vice president of Danella Construction of NY, Inc. launched an initiative that rewards safety instead of penalizing unsafe behavior. The result? A higher level of safety standards compliance for the whole company. A slim publication titled *Toolbox Talks* goes out with employee paychecks on Friday. Safety reminders are prominently featured.

Danella Companies also maintains a toll-free Safety Hotline that employees as well as the public can use to report any unsafe conditions at job sites or work locations. Most recently, Danella implemented a safety alert system through which all Danella employees receive text messages and/or emails in order to keep safety ideas on everyone’s mind.



It is not unusual for a satisfied customer to tell management just how much the Danella focus on safety is appreciated. A major utility client recently wrote to Danella New York:

I want to thank all of your Danella crew members, notably Carlos Afonso and his crew, who worked tirelessly on the 35th St. & 5th Ave. project to excavate, relocate and restore 180 feet of 24-inch steam main. Throughout the project there were some conditions where excavation was limited due to multiple interferences, resulting in tunneling underneath two 30" trunk water mains. All of the crew members demonstrated safe work practices and worked together to achieve the goal. We appreciate all of your team’s hard work and dedication.

None of it is taken for granted. Jim Danella knows that good luck is not a strategy for safety, so every single work day since November 2005, at precisely 7:30 a.m., he convenes, by telephone conference call, a safety meeting with all of his division managers and vice presidents, and a dozen or so safety managers, reviewing what happened the previous day at job sites around the country, as well as general liability issues and automobile or workers’ compensation claims. The call may run ten minutes, an hour, or more—whatever it takes, depending on what happened (or didn’t happen) the day before. “We review what we can do to improve, and it’s an easy way to stay focused,” said Tom Brady, vice president, Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation. “You start your day saying the word ‘safety,’ and you have just made your world a whole lot safer.” **DC**



Exton, Pennsylvania, 1973

continued from page 7

most, and he was giving us a pep talk about how his goal was to put other companies bigger than us out of business. That was his goal, and he was just a young kid. That was pretty bold.”

Not long after Danella bought the company, a labor foreman named Joseph Hemple contacted Jackson about a job. Tired of working construction in Center City, Philadelphia, Hemple told Jackson about the day he was inside a manhole on Twenty-first and Diamond when the bullets started flying from a gunfight in the street. Hemple decided then and there that he had to make a change, filled out an application, and in a week and a half had a new job as the company’s fifth foreman. Hemple was thrilled—even though he had to supply his own truck.

The day he walked out his front door, on his way to work for the first time, there was a Danella crew working in the street right outside his own house. Hemple took it as a sign. *How lucky could a guy be?* he thought to himself.

No one at the company has ever forgotten that for his first assignment, Jackson sent Hemple to Camden, New Jersey, at the time a town with the dubious reputation as the most violent city in the country. On his second day on the job, Hemple was caught in the crossfire from a grocery store robbery and had to slide into a storm drain for cover. As for the assigned job, he finished it in a week and a half and began a career with Jim Danella that would last a lifetime and contribute significantly to the company’s growth.

With a cadre of employees anchored by Jackson, Hemple, Pierce, Uncle Renato, and many others, Jim Danella prepared to grow the company and make it his own. “Uncle Renato was right. Everything *would* be okay.”

Growing a Company

About a year after the purchase of Faulkner, Danella moved the company from Norristown to a nondescript one-story office building at 2290 Butler Pike in the more affluent

Philadelphia suburb of Plymouth Meeting. From this new base, he expanded the construction business through what he terms “calculated steps.” After settling into his new role as owner of a utility construction business, vowing to learn everything he could about developing contacts, the nuances of getting on bid lists, and the complexities of bidding and rebidding, Danella reached out to more businesses in other areas. This is where the calculated steps came in. Before the breakup of the Bell System mandated by the 1982 settlement of a landmark federal antitrust lawsuit against AT&T, every region had its own Bell “member company.” Danella started bidding on telephone maintenance work with these companies, *outside* of Faulkner’s longtime territory of Montgomery County, to neighboring Delaware, Chester, and Bucks Counties, as well as to member companies beyond the



First office, Evergreen Road, East Norriton, Pennsylvania, 1972

state of Pennsylvania. After this geographical expansion, the next step was bidding on lucrative projects in the city of Philadelphia. “Just because you did work in Montgomery County, that didn’t mean you could do work in Philadelphia,” Danella explains. “That took years to break into, but we finally did.”

The major breakthrough came in 1977, when the company won a coveted Bell Telephone maintenance contract that covered Philadelphia and some areas of Bucks and Chester Counties. Recalls Straubel, “It was huge. I actually took over the upper Bucks area, and Dave Aversano took over lower Bucks. We kept that until 1981, and then we lost the Bucks County contract but won the Delaware County contract, so I moved over to that.”

The new maintenance contract brought about the hiring of people like Rick Duich, who would eventually lead the Danella Atlantic Corporation; Michael Zappone, who worked with the crew and later managed the yard and shops; and many others. “I think it started blossoming in the middle to late seventies,” Price Jackson comments. “Things were really moving. We started doing quite a bit of hiring, and we were getting a lot of bids—a lot of work with water companies, and we had a lot of major-size bids with telephone companies. They kept us extremely busy. On Wednesday, it was always called ‘beer and pizza day’ when we would get together

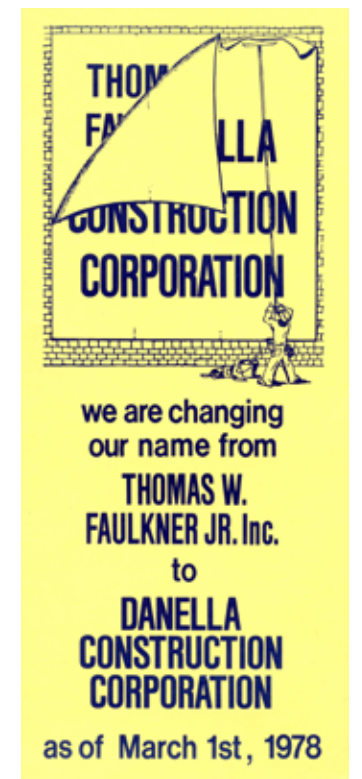
with the customer and settle on final billing. The foremen and the telephone inspectors would come in, and we would have a stack of work orders that the inspectors would approve or discuss. It was just drinking beer, eating pizza, and getting jobs settled.”

With business growing steadily in Philadelphia and surrounding counties, Jim Danella began to work toward securing bids and contracts for utility work in other states. Over the years, the company grew in a hopscotch pattern that was driven more by opportunity than by abstract planning. In short, wherever Jim Danella and his team could find work and bid on contracts, they did their utmost to set up shop.

As the company grew in geographic extent, revenue, and reputation, Danella decided he wanted it to reflect his commitment and expertise, and that meant trading the name of the previous owner for his own. On March 1, 1978, Faulkner became the Danella Construction Corporation.

New Businesses, New States

Over the next ten years, Jim Danella set up more than ten different businesses in almost as many states. He started in 1979 with Danella Construction Corporation of Delaware, Inc., which was initially run by Joe Hemple. Two years later, Price Jackson moved to Ohio to open an office for a contract with Cincinnati Bell, which was the official beginning of J. Daniel & Company, Inc., a name suggested by Gina Pierce to reflect Jim Danella’s middle name. Joe Hemple then moved to Florida to establish Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc.





Colorado

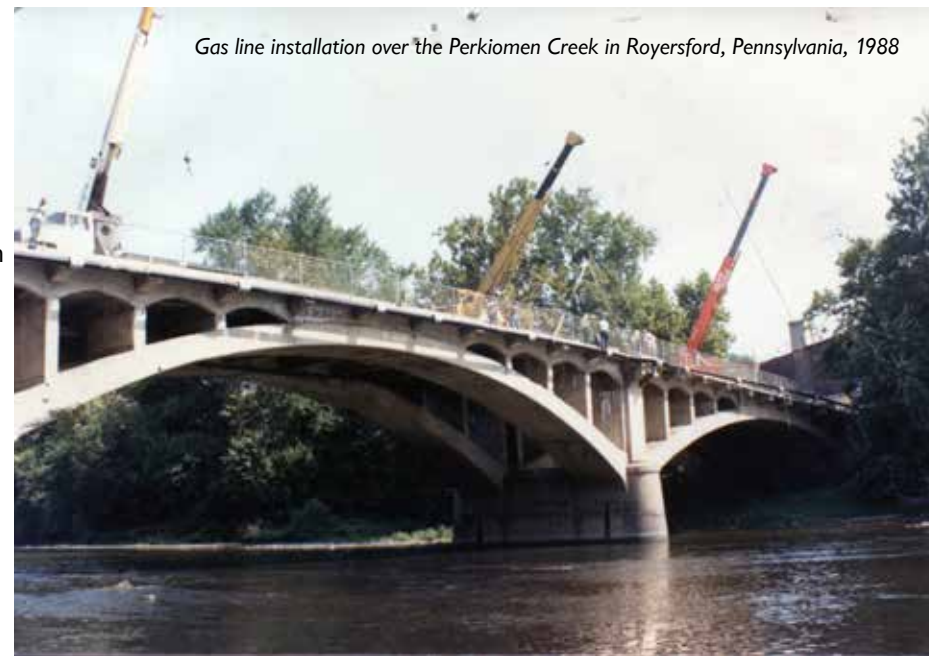
job that few companies are capable of handling. Neas had to overcome many challenges, and a job that was supposed to last two weeks turned into three months, but it was done and done to the customer's complete satisfaction. When the work in Colorado was finished, Neas headed to western Pennsylvania for several months to help coordinate a cable project for MCI. Next came a call to head out to Arizona to coordinate a contract for buried telephone cable conduit and manhole installation.

Pegged as a man who was always willing to get up and go, Neas became one of Danella's traveling warriors. At last, in 2001, he was offered the opportunity to head up the Colorado construction division, which he did from that year until the contract was completed in 2004. While in Colorado on this assignment, he completed his bachelor's degree in night school and was offered the position of vice president/division manager for Danella Construction Corporation of PA (DCC-PA), the position he holds today.

"They would call us 'traveling warriors,' that's definitely true," Neas says. "There were a couple of us who did travel off and on for a long time in our careers."

Additional offices opened in New Jersey, Colorado, New York, and Maryland—all based on construction contracts for utility (water, gas, and electric) and communications companies. The expanding businesses and locations were driven and supported by a unique group of ambitious young project managers. Jim Danella dubbed them his "traveling warriors," and they included Rich Neas, Rick Duich, Pete Marone, and Mike Matozzo, men who would go anywhere and chase any contract to grow the business.

Consider Rich Neas, who joined Danella as a general laborer in 1982. A former carpenter who became an expert in manhole construction for a previous employer, Neas went to work digging ditches and pouring asphalt for Danella construction crews in Pennsylvania. He then moved to Colorado on a special assignment to build field-cast manholes. Wherever possible, utility construction companies speed their work along by using standard pre-cast manholes. But in areas where space is tight or specs call for custom construction, the manholes must be cast on site—field cast—a demanding



Gas line installation over the Perkiomen Creek in Royersford, Pennsylvania, 1988

While pushing the business into new states, Danella also expanded its expertise in utility construction. In 1982 the company embraced the chance to get back into gas line work for PECO when Stan Steinberg, a former PECO employee and gas line foreman, started working for Danella. He explains, "When I joined Danella, the company really didn't have people who knew gas work, and they had some billing disputes with past work. But I knew gas. Jimmy found out that I could do this job, and I straightened everything out. When we were granted the gas contract with PECO, I had to get ten crews on the road, with four or five welders who knew what they were doing. With gas work, you have to have special training to learn how to fuse and weld the pipes together, and you have to be qualified every year, especially the welders. Pretty soon, it all came together, and I was very proud of that. You have a lot of pride, coming in after a day's work and saying, 'We got a lot of pipe in today.'"

Steinberg was a gas foreman and superintendent with DCC-PA until he retired in 1994. Joe D'Innocenti, a Danella laborer and foreman for over twenty-five years, worked for him. "Stan taught me a lot about being a foreman. He came from the field, and he never forgot where he came from. He understood my problems. The construction business is not like working in an office. Every day is different. You may bid a project at x amount of feet of pipe a day, and you may get that number some days, but there are days when you will not. If Stan looked at a time sheet, he might say, 'What happened?' but he always understood."

As the gas utility work expanded, Danella also landed a multiproject contract with AT&T, a coveted contract that employees like Rick Duich considered "a major milestone." Also in 1983, Danella Companies, Inc. expanded by acquiring another company, Counties Construction & Engineering Company, with offices in Philadelphia, Delaware, and New Jersey. Several longtime Counties employees, including Bernie Bonner and Jack Gorman, came to work for Danella after the acquisition. Bonner became an integral part of the Danella team, rising to vice president of construction. He became Danella's bidding specialist and was often described as a "gentle lion." He had a voice "that would scare the bejesus out of you, but he was a kindhearted person," recalls Mike Matozzo, who

started working for Duich in 1985 and eventually became project manager with Danella Atlantic Corporation.

In the history of the Danella Companies, the acquisition of Counties was the exception rather the rule. Jim Danella never set a high priority on acquisition as a way to grow. He far preferred to pursue new business contracts whenever and wherever they came up for bids and suited the firm's business strengths. As CFO Dennis Daly explains, "We took advantage of opportunities but Counties was our only acquisition. The nature of the business did not warrant a premium to a seller. Conversely, a buyer, in the case of someone like Danella, would not be willing to pay the premium because contracts would expire and then, really, what were the guaranteed assets?" The dynamic, aggressive pursuit of new business, Jim Danella decided, was the closest you could get to a "guaranteed" asset.

The Customer Is Always Right

By the mid-1980s, Danella's go-where-the-work-is approach to business began to pay off and pay off handsomely. Revenue grew dramatically over the next several years. To support the company's growth, Danella embraced a

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Long Island Sound, late 1990s

DANELLA COMPANIES, INC.—FROM 1972 TO 2012

When the Danellas purchased Faulkner Construction in 1972, it was a single, small company. Jim began growing it into a company of companies. Over time, as new opportunities emerged and former markets changed or receded, new Danella companies were created, some merged with others, and others fulfilled their contracts. Some companies lasted for a few years, others a few decades, and many were going strong as Danella Companies celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2012. Here is a complete list:



Citation Bravo, 2008. Inset: First airplane: King Air 200/C90, 1983

<u>Company Name</u>	<u>Date Incorporated</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
Danella Companies, Inc. D/B/A Danella Construction Corporation	5/5/72	Active
Danella Equipment Rentals, Inc.	12/22/77	Active
Danella Construction Corporation of Delaware, Inc.	5/2/79	Inactive
J. Daniel & Company, Inc.	10/28/81	Active
Danella Construction Corporation of Colorado, Inc.	10/8/82	Dissolved
Danella, Inc.	3/9/83	Active
JDS Aviation Company	7/15/83	Active
Counties, Inc. (Pennsylvania)	9/13/83	Merged with Danella Companies, Inc. in 1998
Danella Southwest, Inc.	12/1/83	Dissolved
Counties, Inc. (New Jersey)	1/30/84	Active
Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc.	10/8/84	Active
Danella Rental Systems, Inc.	4/4/86	Active
Danella Construction of NY, Inc.	4/6/87	Active
Danella Line Services Company, Inc.	12/16/87	Active
Danella Communications Systems, Inc.	4/19/89	Active
Danella Construction Corporation of Virginia, Inc.	1/12/90	Active
Danella Power Services, Inc.	5/21/90	Merged with Danella Companies, Inc. in 1998
Danella Rental Systems of Canada, Inc.	8/7/91	Dissolved
Danella Southeast of Maryland, Inc.	5/18/92	Inactive
Danella Construction Corporation of Maryland, Inc.	5/18/92	Inactive
Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation	9/28/92	Active (originally called Tangent Associates)
Danella Used Truck & Equipment Sales, Inc.	12/14/92	Active
Counties Corporation	3/22/93	Dissolved
Danella Corp.—Georgia, Inc.	7/20/93	Dissolved
Counties, Inc. (Ohio)	9/12/94	Dissolved
Spindleside Corporation	10/12/94	Active
Counties Drilling Corporation	12/1/95	Active
Danella Highway Systems, Inc.	12/29/00	Dissolved
Danella Mid-Atlantic, Inc.	6/5/06	Active
Danella Utility Construction, Inc.	1/31/08	Active
Danella Atlantic Corporation	12/23/08	Active
Danella Construction Corporation of New Jersey, Inc.	11/9/09	Active
Danella Integrated Solutions, Inc.	3/30/11	Active

“Never give up trying. . .” —Jim Danella



J. Daniel & Co., Inc. office in Sliver Grove, Kentucky 1982



The yard at 2290 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, 1974

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philosophy that revolved around two intimately related business maxims, “The customer is always right” and “Whatever the customer wants, the customer gets.” Making good on this philosophy sometimes required not only pushing up a deadline but also providing more crews and equipment and working through the worst weather to get a job done. Danella was convinced he could successfully complete a project when others said it couldn’t be done. Thomas J. Brady, vice president of Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation, recalls a perfect example of the Danella work ethic—something that had impressed Brady when he worked at AT&T and hired Danella for construction contracts, long before he himself joined the firm in 1998.

“I remember once, I was in a situation where I had to beat another competing communications company. We were coming from an ocean cable landing from Rhode Island and we were on a highway,” says Brady. “And one of our competitors was trying to get from Providence, Rhode Island, to Blackstone, Massachusetts, earlier than we were—they had the right-of-way on the Amtrak railroad. We had a little bit of a head start, but they had everything lined up to beat us. I went to Jim and asked him to put all of the power of his resources behind us—and two days later, he delivered thirty-

five more backhoes up there. We won. We kicked butt! I don’t think there was another company that could or would have done that for us. You want trust? *That’s* what trust is all about.”

Paul Barents, vice president, Danella Rental Systems, Inc., claims, “The only restraint I can remember is when Jim said, ‘There is only one guy who can say ‘no’ to a customer—and that’s me.’ So we always say ‘yes’ to our customers, and we always keep our customers happy.” As Danella points out, keeping customers happy has played a leading role in the company’s success. “I’d have to say always pursuing locally our PECO and Verizon contracts was important because of our long-standing relationships and my loyalty to our first customers, who stuck with me and gave me a chance. Over the years, a lot of work came from contracts that we want to keep, and it’s helped us stabilize and solidify our offices in various outlying areas in Florida and New York and points in between.”

By the mid-1980s, Jim Danella began seriously growing the business through more than contracts and bids. He focused on developing entirely new lines of business. This enabled Danella Construction Corporation to grow into a company of companies that came together under the umbrella



of Danella Companies, Inc. Over time, the lines of business were grouped under four major titles: Danella Construction, the cornerstone of Danella Companies, with different divisions all over the country for utility and communications installation, maintenance, and repair (see chapter 3); Danella Line Services Company, Inc., started in 1985 and becoming an official division in 1987 (see chapter 4); Danella Rental Systems, Inc., begun in 1984 and incorporated in 1986 (see chapter 5); Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation, created in 1998 (see chapter 6).

Not Every Business Flourished

The high-energy rise of the company inevitably brought with it some growing pains. Chuck Engle, who was hired as an accountant in 1988, traveled from office to office, reviewing billing systems, sorting through accounts, and helping computerize the billing and budget systems at Danella. At one point, after discovering a mound of receipts that had yet to be billed to a customer, Engle and CFO Dennis Daly put some new rules in place. “Before, they were more seat-of-the-pants,” admits Engle. “Dennis Daly really established financial systems.”

While seat-of-the-pants accounting methods had to go, Jim Danella refused to jettison the enterprising spirit. He was always willing to take a risk when the risk made sense to him. This drove growth, but it also meant that not all of the businesses he started endure today.

Danella Construction Corporation of Colorado, Inc., which launched in 1984 and had some very successful years, closed in mid-2004 when the contract was completed. Danella Power Services, Inc. launched in 1990 to service transmission lines and electrical tower construction in the Houston, Texas, area, closed after six years, when the utility it served downsized from six contractors to two. “We were the new kids on the block, so we lost out,” explains Danella.

And there was Underground Technology, Inc., launched in 1992 to do underground directional boring and drilling with Danella’s special machines, including one with an unusual thirty-six-inch bore. What soon became clear, however, was that drilling capability at this size did not fit into Danella’s area of utility expertise, which called for directional boring and drilling with the more typical six-inch or four-inch bores. Danella closed down the operation and sold the equipment to an oil-well driller from Alberta, Canada.



Danella Line Services and Rental Systems facilities, Conshohocken Road, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania



First office at 2290 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, 1974-2001

Why close an office you went through the effort and expense to open in the first place? Barents answers, “You close down an office when the office doesn’t make enough money. Jim is never afraid to try things, but if we can’t make a decent buck out of it, even though we hire people with experience, then it’s gone.”

“I was a trial-and-error kind of guy all my life,” Jim Danella readily admits. “Some things just didn’t work out.” A failed business venture in Florida, for example, cost the company millions. This division was shut down after concluding that water-treatment plants and the work it entailed did not blend well with the rest of the business. A spinoff of this failed venture is Danella Utility Construction, Inc., led by Ms. Freddie Brady. Brady was a project manager for the division that completed its contracts, and closed its doors in 2008. Cited as “one of our best project managers,” by John Bass, Brady was retained to lead Danella Utility Construction, Inc.

And despite several attempts in the mid-2000s, Danella Companies has never been able to step into the oil and gas pipeline business. An experiment with Danella Rental Systems in Mexico failed to pan out. Even innovation, which is generally a winner for Danella, does not always produce victory. A

cable and pipe installation system known as a SpiderPlow was simply not a good fit for the company.

To longtime employees like Dennis Daly, the company history is just that much richer, that much truer because Jim Danella “is willing to take risks even though there’s no guarantee of success,” says Daly. “A number of things just didn’t work. Everyone thinks, *Here is this guy, everything he touches turns to gold*, but he has many stories of things that didn’t work out. I see this as part of the personality of the company, and of Jim, to be willing to take risks in a calculated manner.”

There is one thing that nobody at Danella Companies ever risks, and that is the reputation of the firm. The trademark, “Pride in Everything We Do®,” became official in early 2007, but “it was a mantra of this company long before it was written down,” says Tom Brady. “I think we have always had an excellent reputation in the market. Danella was known for getting a job done and doing it right.” Time and again, Jim Danella impressed upon his staff the importance of protecting the company’s reputation. He urges his managers to put any questionable

situation or solution to what he calls “the red-face test,” explaining, “We
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Freddie Brady, Danella Utility Construction, Inc.

FOUR DECADES OF TURNKEY EXPERTISE

In 2012, Danella’s network of divisions nationwide, thirty-three equipment yards, and in excess of fifteen hundred employees enables the company to handle projects on a national scale—regardless of the project’s size, scope, or location. With its experienced labor force, vast equipment resources, management talent, highly trained staff, financial strength, and bonding capabilities, Danella delivers genuine turnkey solutions backed by forty years of uncompromising performance. Danella’s long-proven areas of expertise include:

1. Gas transmission and distribution systems installation
2. Electrical underground and splicing
3. Electrical aerial distribution systems installation
4. Storm recovery and restoration services
5. Water distribution systems
6. Fiber optic cable installation, testing, splicing, and terminating, inside plant and outside plant (ISP/OSP)
7. Under-bridge conduit support systems
8. Conduit and manhole systems installation—by open trench, plowing, and directional drilling methods
9. Manhole installation, including precast, field cast, or rebuild, as well as manhole extensions
10. Buried cable installation using open trench, plowing, and directional drilling
11. Aerial and underground cable and inner-duct installation
12. Aerial and underground cable removal using MCV cable-cutting equipment
13. Restoration of all types, including concrete, blacktop, liquid asphalt, oil and chip, and precast aggregate
14. Project design, engineering, and inspection
15. Rental equipment for short- and long-term needs—for example, trucks, trailers, backhoes, and plows



Stamford, Connecticut

continued from page 18

are not in this business to be embarrassed. Reputation is everything.”

It is a message that has been heard loud, clear, and often, and it is a message passed down throughout the company ranks. Talk to Dave Aversano, who has been with Danella since 1973 as a laborer, truck driver, foreman, and—now—as superintendent for Danella Line Services. He believes that Danella’s “Pride in Everything We Do®,” along with its single-minded emphasis on safety, has enabled the company to project a public image that employees naturally want to protect. “I tell the crews, ‘People, your hard hat, your vest, your safety glasses—that’s your uniform. You step out of that Danella truck in a neighborhood, they know who you are. You should look the part.’”

A New Corporate Headquarters

By 2002, it seemed high time for Danella’s office space to “look the part” as well. With revenues growing, the decision was made to move Danella Companies from its cramped, stuffed-to-the-rafters headquarters on Butler Pike into a gleaming, two-story, forty-thousand-square-foot corporate headquarters on the adjacent property. Paul

Construction of the new building, 2290 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

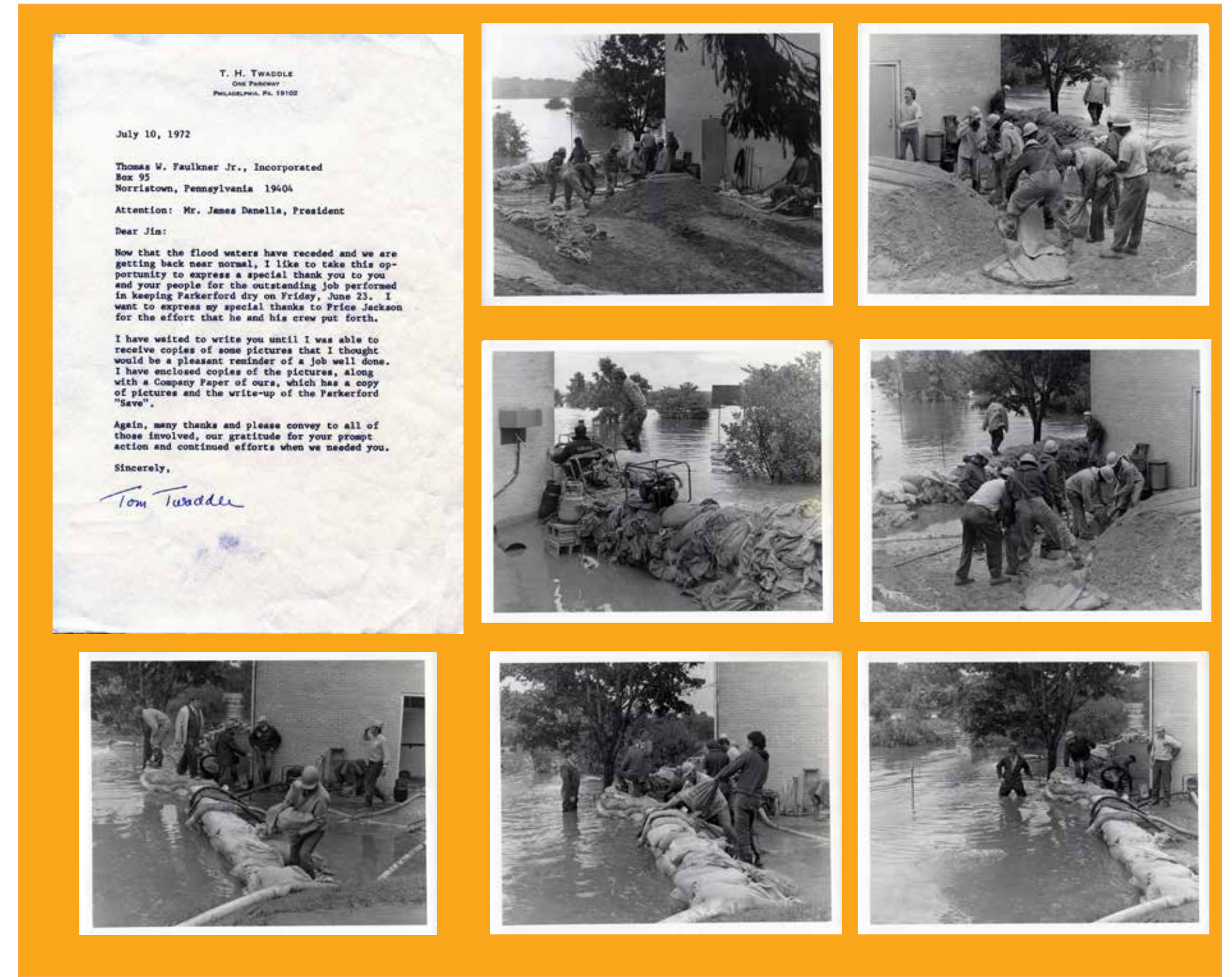


Quakertown, Spring 1973
Price Jackson with Walt Jones,
foreman, and Don Burness

Barents helped coordinate every step of the building and the move, documenting the transition with video and photo albums that signal what an important, symbolic moment this was for the company. Looking at the magnificent new space—with soaring ceilings, a soothing water feature just off the lobby, an expansive front desk for longtime receptionist Natasia Bernstiel, and an abundance of beautifully designed offices and conference rooms—it is hard to recall the original office, even though it is just next door.

But longtime employees try. Cheryl Guffey, for instance, wistfully remembers “the plywood computer tables that Uncle Renato built for the first computer room, a room cobbled together with handmade furniture and tables with two-by-fours for legs.” To which Bob Brust adds, “All my ties would get splintered up by that wood. We look at this place now, and we just can’t believe it.”

The secret to Danella’s success may not be entirely obvious to everyone who walks through the glass doors of the corporate office or surveys the equipment fleet out back. Dennis Daly, who joined Danella in 1987 as chief financial officer, reflects, “When we think about what made us successful, we think about the commitment and the loyalty



T. H. TWADDLE
One Parkway
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

July 10, 1972

Thomas W. Faulkner Jr., Incorporated
Box 95
Norristown, Pennsylvania 19404

Attention: Mr. James Danella, President

Dear Jim:

Now that the flood waters have receded and we are getting back near normal, I like to take this opportunity to express a special thank you to you and your people for the outstanding job performed in keeping Parkerford dry on Friday, June 23. I want to express my special thanks to Price Jackson for the effort that he and his crew put forth.

I have waited to write you until I was able to receive copies of some pictures that I thought would be a pleasant reminder of a job well done. I have enclosed copies of the pictures, along with a Company Paper of ours, which has a copy of pictures and the write-up of the Parkerford "Save".

Again, many thanks and please convey to all of those involved, our gratitude for your prompt action and continued efforts when we needed you.

Sincerely,
Tom Twaddle





Schuylkill River Crossing

include Verizon, AT&T, Cincinnati Bell, PECO, Delmarva Power, CenturyLink, Consolidated Edison (Con Ed), Florida Power & Light (FPL), Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW), Yankee Gas, Aqua America, American Water, Connecticut Power & Light, PSE&G, PP&L, and Jersey Central Power & Light.

After forty years, James D. Danella, the man competitors crowded would never last a year, says he still loves coming to work every day. "I enjoy every facet of the business. One of the things I've always asked myself, though, is, *What is a construction company?* And I keep coming back to the fact that it is a bunch of people and used equipment. You can drive a brand-new dump truck, and once you drive it out of the yard, it's used. It's always used. So it's used equipment and people. And it's the people who make it all work." **DC**

of the people. And what strikes me most is the loyalty of the people in the field, who we in the office don't see day to day. They are out there, doing their jobs, and that is just a marvelous tribute to what Jim established for the company. You see this, whether they are working for the guys in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Colorado, Washington, DC, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia, Pennsylvania, or Delaware. You see people who are absolutely committed to the company. That's the thing that strikes me the most when you think about the success of the Danella Companies. We are not about equipment. We are not about any technology. We are about people. That's what has driven our success."

As Danella Companies celebrates four decades of business, the company of companies has grown from one utility contract and one paving contract in 1972 to nineteen offices with thirty-three equipment yards in eleven states. Jim Danella is justly proud that the company, much as it has grown, still does business with its two original customers, and boasts a list of major clients that



Schuylkill River Crossing



Danella Headquarters, 2290 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

December 2001

These photos were taken to commemorate the last Christmas in the old building. Everyone moved into the new building on 2290 Butler Pike two weeks later.

Natasia Bernstiel and Wendy Mancini at the reception desk



Cina Pierce



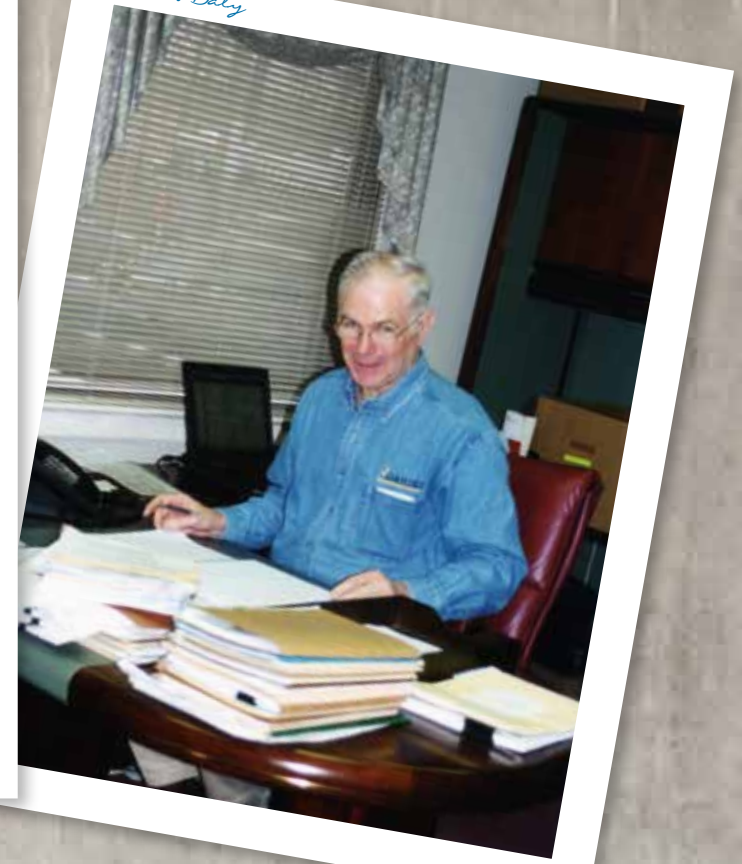
Mike McGahey



Fred Cloherty



Dennis Daly



Dave Seiler



Chuck Engle and Carmen Danella



Cheryl Gullett



Bill Skillet



Left to right: Tom McArthur, Chip Tarnetta, Frank McKay, John Stalks, Ted Hawkins, Pat Donahue, Rick Huebner





Washington, DC, 1995

The Backbone— Danella Construction

Asked to describe what Danella does, Mike Straney, operations manager, Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc., boils it down to what he calls “the basics.” He explains, “We are digging a hole, putting something in it, and covering it up.”

Well . . . yeah. But there is a good deal more to each of those steps. Cheryl Guffey, who began working in Danella’s payroll department in 1985, describes the work of Danella’s largest company this way, “Some of the stuff we do is amazing. If you listen to the guys explain what we do, we even hire scuba divers to help get cables across a river. You would think that we are just ditch diggers—but we hire scuba divers! Whatever it takes to get the job done, at Danella you find the expertise, and you do it.”

Look over a list of current Danella projects from all over the United States. There are hundreds of jobs, the work ranging from muscle-building hard labor to heart-pounding adventure—from steam pipe maintenance under the streets of New York City, to the conduit/manhole installations just outside Philadelphia (the largest Danella has ever constructed), to

“Some of the stuff we do is amazing.” running fiber optic cables around NASCAR racetracks in Daytona Beach, Kalamazoo, Charlotte, and Atlanta. The first company in the Danella family, the corporate backbone of the Danella Companies, Danella Construction has installed and maintained natural gas pipelines for the utility industry since 1972. After four decades, the company has expanded to include not only gas utility and telephone services but also electric utilities, water utilities, and communications installations, repairs, and maintenance.



Unified Autonomy

Today, Danella Construction includes eight main construction divisions in different parts of the country, which account for about 85 percent of Danella Companies' yearly business revenue. These divisions include: Danella Construction Corporation of PA; J. Daniel & Company, Inc., Ohio; Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc.; Danella Construction of NY, Inc.; Danella Construction Corporation of Virginia, Inc.; Danella Construction Corporation of New Jersey, Inc.; Danella Utility Construction, Inc., Florida; and Danella Atlantic Corporation, Maryland (formerly Danella Long Lines).

"Each division is unique," says Rich Neas, one of the original "traveling warriors," who joined the company in 1982 as a laborer and is now vice president and division manager, Danella Construction Corporation of PA. "Some divisions are geared more toward communications work, but we, as well as a few other divisions, are a little more diverse through gas, electric, and water. I'm not saying we are the only division that performs that work, but we are one of the few divisions that handle it."

Rick Duich, division manager for Danella Atlantic Corporation, coordinates construction and maintenance for AT&T, CenturyLink (formerly Qwest), and Verizon in Washington, DC, and southern Maryland, along with contracts that "cover pretty much the East Coast for AT&T."

What do you do? It is a question Duich answers with, "We all do windows." In other words, we do whatever the client wants.

As vice president of construction at Danella, John Bass coordinates the work of all of the construction divisions, a job held by Bernie Bonner until he passed away in 2008. Bonner's death left a deeply felt void in Danella's



First project with the on-track cable plow, Middletown, Ohio, 1989

BIDDING, CONTRACTS, JOBS, WORKERS: THE SCALE AND SIZE OF WORK ON A TYPICAL DAY

Danella Companies, Inc. has continuously grown over four decades because it always dared to go where there was work, which means bidding contracts and coordinating as many as eighteen hundred workers every day on hundreds of job sites. Rich Neas, vice president, Danella Construction Corporation of PA, the oldest and largest construction division in the company, provided insight into the myriad clients, crews, jobs, and responsibilities from over the course of a year. “It’s difficult to say how many jobs are in progress at any given time,” said Neas. “Danella PA dispatches fifty to sixty crews per day to various-sized jobs, with a crew makeup ranging from one to eight workers of various labor classifications. We also have a number of subcontract crews working at any given time, performing restoration, directional drilling, and other miscellaneous responsibilities.”

The scale and size of construction contracts in progress on any given day is staggering. As PECO’s contractor of choice (preferred vendor) for gas—an annual contract that produces in excess of 360 work orders per year—Danella staffs various-sized jobs requiring fifteen to twenty crews to

support the work. It is also the contractor of choice for electric, another annual contract, this one generating in excess of 475 work orders per year, ranging in job size, requiring three to five crews to support the work.

Danella’s other electric bids resulted in nineteen projects in 2011, ranging in job size requiring three to five crews, while a directional drilling contract produced over seventy-five work orders, each requiring two to four crews to support the work. The New Residential Construction Group (NRCCG) services an annual contract that results in over four hundred work orders per year, requiring five to seven crews to support the work.

For Aqua Water, Danella performs construction and paving work on more than sixty work orders each year, each requiring five to seven crews to support the work, while for PGW Gas, the company was awarded sixteen project awards in 2011, requiring three to five crews to support the work. New business for PGW included small-hole paving, and Danella also handled work in communications, where intermittent crews were required. **DC**



Danella Emergency Response Team Convoy



Bernie Bonner

management team, but Bass built on the foundation Bonner laid and worked to improve on the Bonner legacy. He has focused on creating additional “best practices” for all of the divisions, standardizing all parts of the enterprise to the lofty level of the same bar, and, where necessary, reining in a few divisions that may have operated too independently at times.

“We want everyone to be autonomous and to be entrepreneurial, but at the

same time, we are making sure that they are using like methods and like systems and communicating well,” Bass explains. “There probably wasn’t as much of that uniformity expected in the past as there is now.”

“No Monuments to Be Seen”

There is an undeniable allure about big construction projects. The kid in everyone all marvels at the muscular ingenuity of the latest pieces of equipment at work, the new technologies, and the sheer scale of the projects Danella undertakes. In Florida, for instance, the company recently finished breaking ground in the city of Palm Coast on projects that include forty-three miles of wiring for the town’s own municipal telephone network. And in New York, a writer for *Construction Today* magazine gushed that Danella’s underground installations ranged from “one inch to 54 inches in diameter, from one city block to more than 30 miles in length” and included “one of the largest, newest, state-of-the-art, well-maintained equipment fleets in the underground utilities industry, from mini-excavators to giant, full-sized track excavators and from tiny

pneumatic missile boring equipment to some of the largest horizontal directional drilling equipment available on the market.”

There is the majesty and drama of human achievement in big construction projects, but not everything about utility work is exciting. The jobs require strength, stamina, character, and commitment. Richard “Skinner” Gundel, who worked as a truck driver for Danella Construction of PA from 1979 to the last day of 2010, described his career with the company as “thirty-two years of getting up and going to work. I got up at 4:15 a.m. every day, came in here by 6 a.m., drove out to the job to see what they needed, loaded up materials—the stones, the screenings, the sand, whatever they needed. I just worked with the crews, back and forth to the yard or to the quarries, depending on what the job called for. With our paving contracts, the gas utility company would shut off a person’s gas and they would cut a hole in the ground, so we’d come along and repair it. Sometimes I was running all day, getting supplies.”

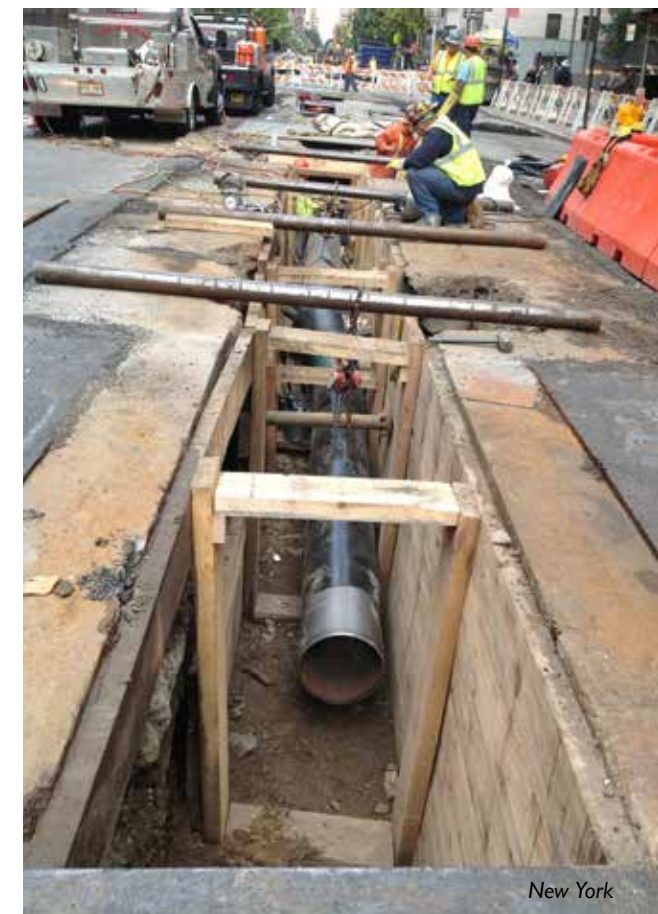
When it comes to watching the crews—in Skinner Gundel’s day, “We had forty guys driving trucks,” whereas today, “we subcontract out most



Bernie Bonner at a job site in Colorado, 1998



Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia



New York

of our trucking business” and “only have seven or eight of our own drivers”—Gundel has seen it all. “The foreman is the top guy. He likes to yell and tell you what to do,” he says. “The laborers, for lack of any other word, they are the ditch diggers. Teamsters are the truck drivers. Crews can work well together if the foreman puts

them where they are comfortable. Some like steel gas, some like plastic gas, some like water. In this job if you have a bad personality, you are not going to make it in this organization. These guys won’t put up with you. If you are lazy and you don’t show up, you won’t be here. You have to be a self-starter to keep the job. It’s backbreaking work, but it’s been a good job. It’s honest work, and it keeps you straight.” Gundel calls it “a privilege to work for Jim Danella” and notes that when he first met him, “when I started here, I called him ‘Mr. Danella,’ and he immediately told me to call him ‘Jim.’”

Peter Mazzari, vice president of Danella Construction of NY, Inc., understands that the kind of construction his crews do, utility and communications projects, is mostly underground, “with no monuments to be seen.” It doesn’t matter to him, and he says it doesn’t matter to anyone

who works for Danella Construction. They all take pride in the fact that their work, seen or unseen, is vital. “We know,” Mazzari says, “that the lights would not light, the communication services would not function, the heaters would not heat, and the water would not flow without the efforts of the men and women at Danella.” **DC**



Miguel Marmalejos, DCC-NY, hired 1991

EVERYDAY CHALLENGES . . . EVERYDAY PERFORMANCE

Horizontal Directional Drilling under the Harlem River in New York How do you connect two teeming New York boroughs, Manhattan and the Bronx, with brand-new electrical service when there's a river in between, you aren't allowed to put any cables above ground, and you can't expect the city to stand still while you do the job? You hire a company with advanced expertise in

under-river horizontal drilling to allow the passage of new electrical conduits. **The Details** HDD—horizontal directional drilling—is a steerable method of installing conduits and cables underground in a long, shallow arc that takes the conduit and cable exactly where you need it to go, without disrupting surface activities by having to do a lot of surface digging. The project under



New York City

the Harlem River required four separate thirty-six-inch-diameter directional bores, each approximately 1,100 feet long. Each of these bores carried seven, six-inch-diameter electrical conduits, making for a total of 30,800 feet of conduits to accommodate 345-kV electrical cables. With a six-month window, the deadline was tight, but the finished project provided the missing link for new electrical service between the boroughs. **The Challenges** No under-river directional bore is ever easy, and this project was further complicated by the necessity of also boring under the continually busy Metro North commuter railroad tracks that parallel the river. Moreover, as Peter Mazzari, vice president and division manager, Danella Construction of NY, Inc., explains, HDD in a densely populated city, especially under a river, presents formidable environmental challenges and requires meticulous monitoring even as you press the work forward to meet hard deadlines. The equipment required is both highly specialized and extremely expensive. Accuracy is, of course, critical, mainly because the drilling head—the bit end of the operation—is underground and therefore totally invisible from the surface. Fail to get it right from the start, and you create a costly catastrophe. The work, Mazzari comments, “started in the winter, so we had the weather to deal with, but we finished on schedule in 2008. At any given time, we have probably a dozen projects going on, and this was a very large, individual project.”

New York: Second Avenue Subway, Thirty-Inch Gas Main New Yorkers and the city officials who govern them have known for a long time—a very long time—that the Upper East Side of Manhattan is underserved by rapid transit. Plans for a “Second Avenue Subway” were drawn up way back in 1929, but financial problems interrupted work throughout the last seven decades of the twentieth century. It was not until March 2007 that a tunneling contract was finally awarded, and Phase I of the long-awaited subway, between the existing BMT 63rd Street Line and 96th Street and Second Avenue—about eight and a half miles of subway—broke ground. Unfortunately, preliminary excavation to accommodate the tunnel boring machine that would dig the actual subway delayed the main dig until May 2010. At that point in this highest of high-profile projects, Danella was called in to help reroute existing gas lines that were in the way of the new subway. **The Details** Some two thousand feet, more than a third of a mile, of thirty-inch steel gas main had to be relocated to make way for the dig. To avoid massive disruption of service, Danella crews fabricated new connectors on site to redirect and reconnect existing gas lines at each end of the project. A specialized crew was dedicated exclusively to this demanding work for

nearly six months. **The Challenges** “Manhattan is quite a different world,” Mazzari dryly observes. “It’s very stressful, and you have to keep your safety, your quality, and productivity up at all times. It’s extremely difficult dealing with pedestrians and vehicles. In addition, excavating Manhattan streets is always challenging. New York officials have historical documents showing where they think existing utilities are. But these historical documents rarely prove to be accurate.” He explains that any Manhattan excavation is, in large part, a subterranean expedition of discovery and exploration—and that, he says, “adds cost and time to a job, which is why everything in Manhattan is more difficult.”

New York: Steam Rehabilitation Project, Manhattan Evidence of steam leaks are familiar to all Manhattanites, who are accustomed to seeing white vapor rising from the orange plastic chimneys that poke up here and there along sidewalks and streets. What many people don’t know, however, is that the sources of those leaks have to be found and fixed, not only because they reduce efficiency of service, but also because they indicate system failures that may develop into major explosive ruptures, spewing shrapnel and superheated steam with potentially deadly consequences. Just such a disaster occurred in July 2007, when a twenty-four-inch steam pipe exploded near Grand Central Terminal, its four-story, 400-degree geyser causing severe injuries, burns, and panic at rush hour.

The Details In 2008, Danella was hired to find and fix these leaks as part of an ongoing program. In doing so, the company is applying cutting-edge, twenty-first-century techniques with Manhattan’s aging nineteenth-century steam technology. The city’s steam system dates to March 3, 1882, when the United Bank Building on lower Broadway became the first customer to benefit from steam power when the New York Steam Company turned on the valves underneath the ground. By the 1930s, the demand for steam—to supply Manhattan’s rising skyscrapers with heat and hot water, the city’s hospitals with the means of reliable sterilization, and even restaurants with heat sources for cooking—prompted New York Edison Company to pitch in, sending excess steam to the New York Steam Company to drive electric turbine generators. Today, Con Ed pushes steam through some 105 miles of mains and service pipes to more than 1,800 Manhattan customers.

The process is now called “co-generation”—getting the most out of the steam that drives generator turbines—and it is both profitable and environmentally efficient. But it is not without hazards.

The steam is initially produced at pressures of nearly 2,000 psi at 900 degrees Fahrenheit, more than four times the temperature of boiling water. By the time it's piped under the streets of Manhattan, from below 96th Street down to the Battery at the island's southern tip, the pressure is a tamer 170 psi at 350 degrees, but still extremely dangerous if there is a major rupture.

While working underground in a stifling, claustrophobic, and always hazardous environment is a daunting prospect, Danella's challenges actually start earlier, with locating the precise origin of each leak. For one thing, the system runs in pipes cased inside of other pipes. This increases safety, but it can make detection incredibly difficult. If there is a leak in the middle of the block, for instance, the steam typically stays between the inner and outer pipes before escaping through a manhole to the street. A highly specialized Danella crew finds the exact location of the leak by judiciously drilling exploratory holes. When the problem is found, Danella welders install new steel pipe to correct the problem.

The job, however, often requires more than finding the leak and replacing the broken pipes. Mains in older portions of the steam system are insulated with carcinogenic asbestos, which means that the Danella crews, trained and certified in sensitive abatement work, must painstakingly remove the asbestos and safely dispose of it before repair work proceeds. The company replaces these old steam mains with



Jim Koch, DLSI, hired 1979, rebuilding a manhole in Whitmarsh, Pennsylvania, 1996

modern steel, thirty-inch-diameter pipes covered in an environmentally safe non-asbestos insulation.

Installing new pipe typically requires removing and rebuilding the original concrete housing around the pipes. Often, manholes require repair or replacement, and, in many cases, new valves have to be fitted. All of this work has the potential of disrupting traffic in one of the world's most active and congested commercial spaces. Danella rotates six crews of six people each—three shifts in the day and three shifts at night—to get the job done safely, quickly, and perfectly.

The Challenges The steam rehabilitation project requires highly specialized personnel willing and able to work under supremely demanding conditions. “It’s like having miners, basically,” says Peter Mazzari, vice president of Danella Construction of NY, Inc. At some eight feet below street level, “The steam crews work in temperatures that reach 250 degrees, blowing hot steam. It’s brutal, especially in the summer, but that’s when we need to get the work done. The steam system supplies heat and hot water to Manhattan, and they don’t like to do steam shutoffs in the winter.” Not that the crews close up shop when the weather turns cold. “We still do excavation work in winter,” Mazzari explains, “but we just don’t shut the main off.”

Pennsylvania: 40th Street Bridge Relocation Project After some ninety years of hard use, the 40th Street Bridge, one of three spans connecting Philadelphia’s East Parkside and Mantua neighborhoods, was closed down in 2007 as too dangerous to continue to take traffic. The bridge, which carries 40th Street over the heavily used Amtrak tracks, was slated for demolition followed by reconstruction. However, before either demolition or reconstruction could begin, it was necessary to relocate a complex electric structure. Danella was brought in to do the job, which involved difficult field-cast manhole construction and conduit work in very tight quarters.

The Details The job began in October 2009 and concluded in early 2011. The project required building a twelve-duct conduit structure connected to five manholes, which were spaced from twenty-five to sixty feet apart. Because of the space restrictions, standard prefabricated manholes could not be inserted. Instead of executing a relatively straightforward installation, Danella had to custom-create field-cast manholes—large concrete structures entirely fabricated and poured onsite. Few construction companies have the equipment or the expertise to field cast manholes. For Danella, this work is a specialty. It requires complete mastery of design, the ability to build

custom forms, and the knowledge to mix the material and cast it perfectly—in the field and, very often, under conditions that are far from ideal. **The Challenges** Besides the rigors of field-casting multiple and complex manholes, the extreme Philadelphia weather in the winter and spring of 2009–2010 multiplied the difficulties of an already highly demanding job. The snowfall that winter shattered records and was followed by an unusually wet spring. Rich Neas, vice president, Danella Construction Corporation of PA, explains the brutal conditions that “beat the heck out of us.” He rates the project as “very challenging. Between constantly trying to manage the project and manage the elements, we nearly shut down in February and we probably were down to two days a week in March. There is no doubt that it is always a challenge when working in that kind of weather.”

What Neas offers is an explanation, not an excuse. The fact is this: Despite the hardships and setbacks caused by the weather, Danella completed its work on schedule. No delays were imposed on any other contractors.

Danella’s formidable experience with field-cast manhole construction was instrumental in securing an intensely competitive-bid project. Neas doesn’t gloat over the victory. As the legendary pitcher Dizzy Dean used to say, “It ain’t braggin’ if you can do it,” and Neas simply states plain fact when he describes Danella as “more proficient at building field-cast manholes [than our competitors]. We have guys who have been here for many, many years, and their experience in this area definitely benefits us.”

Pennsylvania: Interstate 95 Off-Ramp Project Nearly fourteen thousand feet in total length, accommodating five lanes of highway and two of sidewalk, the steel cantilever Commodore Barry Bridge has spanned the Delaware River from Chester, Pennsylvania, to Logan Township, New Jersey, since it was opened in 1974. It is a significant landmark and has been for nearly forty years. What few people see, however, is the utility infrastructure intimately associated with the span. In 2009, Danella was called on to fabricate and install a massive twenty-inch-diameter steel main gas pipeline at the foot of the bridge on the Pennsylvania side. **The Details** As part of a much-needed revitalization, the city of Chester invited construction of a new waterfront casino and soccer stadium, a project that also motivated the building of a new off-ramp from Interstate 95. To accommodate the ramp, the utility company had to relocate its utility lines. From an engineering standpoint, unlike the 40th Street Bridge project, the job was not especially challenging. It was, however, highly labor intensive. To conform the massive pipeline within

the bridge structure, many offsets—essentially, king-size pipe fittings—had to be fabricated and installed. As Danella’s Rich Neas explains, “On normal distribution work, you can handle the fittings a lot easier. This job, however, presented off-ramp sections with offsets ranging from 15-foot offsets to 110-foot offsets.” The tight ten-week contract called for crews to perform many precision measurements and accurate grade assessments. As always for gas work, tolerances were critical. In addition, the high heat required for welding the subsurface pipes was a challenge—in other words, perfectly suited to Danella expertise and equipment.

Pennsylvania: Warminster Conduit and Manhole/Vault Installation As ditches go, this was one of the biggest Danella Construction Corporation of PA ever dug. In November 2009, PECO, a Philadelphia-based electric and natural gas utility serving 1.6 million electric and 491,000 natural gas customers in southeastern Pennsylvania, called on its longtime contractor to build a new conduit and manhole installation for an electrical substation it was expanding in the Bucks County township of Warminster, some twenty miles north of Philadelphia. **The Details** Danella had to dig a mile and a third of trench to absorb a structure that ranged from eight to ten ducts—in other words, a very large conduit structure. In addition to the 7,000 feet of trench, there was a manhole installation that required an excavation 140 feet long by 12 feet wide by 12 feet deep. The manhole “vault” to be installed in this big hole was 130 feet long by 10 feet wide. Is this big? The typical manhole vault measures 12-by-12-by-12 feet. Danella delivered the gargantuan vault in eleven separate sections for installation.

In addition to the great main vault, Danella was contracted to build six regular-sized manholes. Everything—the main vault and the six others—were connected to the extensive conduit for electric lines.

As with all utility projects in major metropolitan areas, time was the implacable foe. Service had to be up ASAP and, despite the enormous size of the dig, the impact of construction on the community had to be minimized. Safety was not only a key consideration for the community, especially along heavily travelled municipal and state highways, it was of great concern to crews working in the presence of heavy equipment in tight below-ground clearances. Danella dispatched multiple crews, each consisting of six to eight workers. **The Challenges** The sheer size of the project presented the most formidable and unique challenges, especially when, at a depth of nine feet, hazardous soil conditions and groundwater were discovered. “That was unexpected,” Rich Neas remarks. Shoring became critical in the excavation,



Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral

and, Neas explains, “We had to set up a pump station in order to keep the water down.” Any ditch can fill with water. When it’s a really big ditch, water can be a really big problem. Danella engineers knew the problem had to be solved, and they solved it with no time lost.

Florida: Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral In 2005, Danella’s Florida division was subcontracted by a major defense industry contractor that provided cable and fiber optics services to the 45th Operations Group of the U.S. Air Force’s 45th Space Wing at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The lineage of the 45th Space Wing goes back to 1949, even before the official start of the United States space program. The Wing has carried out a host of U.S. military technology missions, foreign military missions, and civilian/commercial space launches, and it has played a key role in many scientific space missions. No matter how high the Space Wing lofts a booster or satellite, however, its operations depend on flawless technology

underground. That is where Danella came in. **The Details** Danella provided all services related to the underground communications project the primary contractor had been hired to create. Danella crews laid cables and fiber optics, performed complex splicing operations, installed all the necessary conduits, and built the manholes. **A Testament to Quality** In 2008, when the primary contractor lost the job, Danella was immediately chosen as subcontractor to the new primary defense contractor. Most often, a new primary brings in its own set of subcontractors; the fact that they chose instead to retain Danella is a high-stakes testament to the quality of the company’s work.

Technology and expertise played a big part in the new contractor’s decision to retain Danella. But the company also had built so pervasive a reputation for extensive and innovative safety precautions and procedures that what Joseph Hemple, president of Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc., most vividly recalls is how visitors to the Space Center often interrupted his crews to ask about safety procedures. As proud as Hemple was that his company had been chosen—twice over, no less—to contribute to the national defense and the nation’s supremacy in space technology, he also admits that it “was a nice feather in our hat, being recognized as a safe contractor.” Three years in a row, Kennedy Space Center itself officially recognized Danella as one of its Quality Service Providers.

Florida: Jupiter Under-Bridge Project In 2008, a major telecommunications company hired Danella’s Florida Division to carry out a repair and rehabilitation project under the Jupiter Bridge in Jupiter, Florida. Because it involved operating on the underside of this very active bridge, the hiring company considered the work sufficiently complex to warrant scheduling six to eight months for completion. Danella did the work in exactly twenty-eight days. **The Secret** In addition to the expertise and experience Danella offers to all of its clients, the company brought to this project a secret weapon in the form of a highly specialized piece of equipment dubbed a “snooper.” Mounted on a vehicle stationed on the side of the bridge roadway, the snooper is capable of lowering a construction platform over the bridge rail and down under the bridge itself. Working on this platform, Danella crews have total access to the underside of the span, thereby significantly increasing productivity. **The Details** The project itself was straightforward, though highly demanding and arduous. It consisted of replacing nuts and bolts designed to support, at 195 locations under the bridge, a twenty-four-way telecommunications duct run. Each location was secured by 12 bolts, each

bolt approximately fifteen inches long, and one-inch nuts—2,340 bolts and nuts in all. Each of these pieces of hardware was located fifty feet in from the outside edge of the bridge. And each of these nuts and bolts was badly rusted and corroded by years of saltwater action. The critical hardware was deteriorating, fused, frozen—and in danger of letting the duct collapse and, with it, severing a critical telecom link. **The Challenges** The conventional approach to this massive rehabilitation job would have been to set up working platforms on barges secured under the bridge. This was ruled out from the get-go because the boats and barges would put an unacceptable crimp in the flow of river traffic. Ordinarily, this would leave no alternative other than building drop scaffolding and rigging the scaffolding. And that is where the six- to eight-month estimated schedule came in. Extensive scaffolding and rigging jobs are labor-intensive, time consuming, and cash eating. Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc. president Joseph Hemple knew about a special truck that had been designed and constructed specifically to allow crews to work under bridges over water. The rig lowered an attached platform—really, a suspended sidewalk—that made it possible for the crews to work safely, efficiently, and for extended periods under a bridge. Hemple immediately secured the unique rig. “It was,” he exclaims today, “safer than walking down the sidewalk. We had so much attention from it, I put a supervisor out there just to field the questions and to keep people from climbing down to see what was under the bridge.” Tradition is a wonderful thing—until a job demands out-of-the-box innovation. In the end, the work was done, and the customer was thrilled by the cash that never came out of his bottom line.

Florida: The NASCAR Project Picture a guy in a hard hat wielding a shovel. Now picture a NASCAR driver approaching 200 MPH around the NASCAR track at Daytona. Can you connect the dots? Danella’s Joe Hemple did just that in 2004, when he took a call from a rep who worked for Next G, an engineering firm working for NEXTEL.

“What would it cost,” the rep asked, “to put a fiber optic ring on a race track?” **The Details** It was by no means an idle inquiry. NASCAR has 75 million fans worldwide, who buy something like \$3 billion in NASCAR-licensed merchandise each and every year. As for television ratings, NASCAR is second only to the NFL among professional sports franchises. Obviously, the way each race is run is critical, and in 2004, NASCAR officials were looking to on-track technology to monitor each car’s location, count laps, measure speed, and, during yellow-flag laps, help prevent illegal passing. The

solution was digital technology in which monitoring devices were to be linked to processors via state-of-the-art fiber optic systems.

From 2004 to 2006, Danella worked as the contractor for the global wireless network solutions provider to install its fiber optic systems at racetracks. First up was Daytona, which was followed by NASCAR racetracks in Atlanta, Charlotte, and Brooklyn, Michigan, home of the Michigan International Speedway. At each track, Danella created a 100 percent turnkey installation for the system, which was installed in a giant circuit all around the track, the sensing equipment either positioned under the grandstands or suspended from steel beams around the grandstands. In close collaboration with the wireless provider and Danella Companies’ own engineering team, Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc. crews determined the necessary capacity, installed switching gear and computerized counters, and then linked them with the fiber optic cables. Into the bargain, Danella also helped NASCAR to increase its wireless tower and signal transmission strength at Daytona. During races at the legendary Florida track, NASCAR too often fell victim to its own popularity, as fans ate up precious bandwidth through their extensive use of cellular telephones, texting, and Tweets—as well as by simply following the race on their radios. **The Challenges** Only those who are not avid NASCAR fans think a racetrack is a racetrack is a racetrack. Each NASCAR track is unique, and each fiber optic installation was, accordingly, different. Michigan proved to be the most challenging track to set up because it “had a lot of paving, blacktop, and concrete,” says Hemple. “The other tracks, you could get off the paving and into sod” to place the cables underground—always the preferred location. Conditions at Michigan demanded more ingenuity and versatility. Danella engineers and crews came through. “We would send out a group of engineers to perform a route analysis,” as Hemple explains. In the case of Michigan, “We went aerial, underground, and hung cables on steel beams that held up the grandstands.”

Project time from start to finish varied, depending on the track. At Michigan, due to snow and pavement, installation took more than two months. Elsewhere, work was completed more quickly—but, regardless of location, “You cannot get near the tracks when they are having the race,” Hemple notes. He had to shut down construction in Charlotte for a month to accommodate NASCAR time trials and tire testing.

Danella dispatched crews consisting of twelve to fourteen people to each track. This deployment inspired Hemple to assemble a permanent “elite” construction group, which includes veterans of the NASCAR

project, “A few fiber optic splicers who are just out of this world.” While fiber optics is at the leading edge of technology, working with the cable involves a lot of old-school craftsmanship—even art. Joining lengths of optical fiber is far more complex than twisting together the ends of copper wire. The ends of the fibers must be meticulously “cleaved” with a special cleaving tool to create a perfectly flat endface that is flawlessly perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the fiber. The cleaved fiber ends are then spliced together, an operation that, again, demands skill to avoid

making a connection that loses too much of the optical signal. Excellence and speed are top requisites.

The Danella fiber team, Hemple proudly boasts, “can splice in an eight-hour day what would take others two days.” What makes them so good? “What makes any individual good at what he does? He likes what he does. If you enjoy what you are doing and you are the best, you will be the leader of the pack.”



Virginia: Networking a Military Base Located in Fairfax County, Virginia, Fort Belvoir is headquarters for a number of major military commands, including the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, the Defense Logistics Agency, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, among others. It is also home to a division of the Virginia National Guard, elements of ten Army Major Commands, and numerous other agencies of the Defense Department and even an agency from the U.S. Treasury. The modern American military is a thoroughly networked institution, and the many activities at Fort Belvoir demand an especially high level of digital networking. A major telecommunications company called on Danella to install fiber optic cables throughout the base, an assignment that also required installing mainline communication systems to the homes of personnel in and around the base. **The Details** For decades, Danella has maintained a cadre of highly trained workers to service security-conscious telecommunications and electric utility customers. By conducting background checks on employees in advance of specific job requirements, Danella can hit the ground running when a sensitive contract demands an uncompromising level of security. In addition to putting secure, background-checked crews on the project, Danella also handpicked technically savvy professionals led by experienced and knowledgeable crew leaders, long-term Danella employees who had learned the service construction business from the ground up. The A-team for Fort Belvoir consisted of ten employees on two different crews.

Because installing new conduit systems is expensive, labor-intensive, disruptive, and time-consuming, rodding has become a best-cost option to efficiently provide pathways from Point A to Point B. High value does not, however, mean cutting corners. At Fort Belvoir, Danella used state-of-the-art equipment to provide both the strength and the power required for an extensive, highly sophisticated, absolutely reliable, and highly secure fiber optic cable installation. **The Challenges** The initial challenge, meeting the tight security requirements for workers at an army facility, presented no real difficulty for Danella. With crews pre-cleared by background checks, the company was able to submit to the U.S. Army and federal government the names of all crew members prior to starting the work and still guarantee that the job would be completed within the two-week window stipulated by contract. “Our guys are always efficient, and we are able to meet those critical deadlines,” says Travis Walter, former safety manager for Danella Construction Corporation of Virginia, Inc. “Even with the need for extensive background checks—which our competition can’t always provide on a fast turnaround—we are still able to meet tight deadlines. Our crews know what

they need before starting the work, and they all go out properly equipped to do the job. They are not left short-handed on the job, and that’s one of Danella’s strengths.”

Virginia: Setting a Fifty-Foot Pole between Live Wires Imagine a serene road outside the D.C. bedroom community of Great Falls, Virginia. Few passersby would take the time to look at a forty-foot telephone pole along the highway, but those who happened to take a second glance would undoubtedly notice that this one was heavily overloaded with communications and power lines. Not very pretty—but that wasn’t the problem at issue. Planted on a sharp turn, it was only a matter of time before the pole was hit by a vehicle taking the turn too wide. Recently, that time came. A vehicle slammed into it, and although the pole remained intact, the telecommunications company whose customers depended on the lines this pole carried were not willing to leave its continued survival to chance. The kind of hit it had absorbed might well have compromised it. A strong wind, a storm, ice, another errant motorist—and down it could come. Accordingly, the company contacted its longtime construction contractor, Danella Construction Corporation of Virginia, Inc., to replace it. **The Details** One small detail. Danella had to replace the existing pole with a new fifty-five-foot pole—between live power lines, which, because of critical customer demand, could not be shut down during the new installation. **The Challenges** Crew supervisors knew that, once the new pole was in place, each line of telephone service on the existing pole would have to be transferred to the new one. It was a complicated job and, in the presence of high-voltage wires, not a little dangerous. The company handled it with sophisticated equipment and the appropriate tools, all in the hands of an experienced crew consisting of three aerial experts and three ground crew safety specialists.

The emphasis was on safety. The aerial crew wore special non-conductive clothing and equipment to minimize the all-too-real risk of electrocution. For its part, the ground crews adhered to strict state requirements to ensure the safety of all passing motorists while the work was under way.

“It took great skill and teamwork to get the job done,” says Travis Walter. “There was no room for error. To see this job done without any problems was a tribute to the Danella organization. This was a job that not many companies could have done. To know that we could not only get it done but get it done safely and efficiently was a proud feeling. This is what separates us from the competition.” **DC**

MAY 26, 2011—A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DANELLA CONSTRUCTION OF NY, INC.

On Thursday, May 26, 2011, Danella vice president Peter Mazzari was asked to describe a day's work at Danella Construction of NY, Inc. He responded with the following detailed list of ten different assignments for his day and night crews. This behind-the-scenes, unique look at work assignments highlights Danella's work for long-term client Consolidated Edison Company of New York (Con Ed), a utility company that provides electric service in New York and most of Westchester County, natural gas service in three boroughs and Westchester, and steam service in most of Manhattan; the continued push to finish assignments for two different clients at the World Trade Center before the tenth anniversary of that historic terrorist attack; and a peek inside a job for a relatively new Danella client, Northeast Utilities, the largest utility system in New England.

Mazzari's descriptions reveal the depth, diversity, and dedication of the entire Danella organization through the experiences of one construction division on one spring day.

36 East Fifty-Eighth Street

Client: Con Ed Gas Department

Project is located in a very high-profile area directly in front of the Four Seasons Hotel. Replacement of 150 feet of twelve-inch-diameter cast iron leaking gas main. Asbestos found present in the soil and required abatement. New installation is twelve-inch-diameter welded steel gas main.

Fifth Avenue, north of Sixty-Third Street

Client: Con Edison Steam Department

We exposed a leaking steam pipe from 1917 requiring repair prior to the tie-in of a new steam service. During the repair process the leak will be controlled through Venturi venting. We are excavating and sheeting and removing concrete housing. Once

the housing is removed the asbestos crew will be brought in to abate. The new service pipe will be tied in.

Third Avenue, north of Eightieth Street

Client: Con Edison Steam Department

This location we are excavating over a six-inch service to a building that has nine feet of cover on the service pipe. What appears to be a steam leak has turned out to be a NYC water main leak discharging water into the steam housing below the water main. We will continue to excavate, sheet, and break housing. We will abate the asbestos insulation, install new fiberglass insulation, and build new housing. The new housing will be waterproofed with bituthene material. This waterproofing process will prevent any leaking water-main water from causing a vapor condition and vapor damage to the building.

Thirty-Fifth Street, east of Sixth Avenue

Client: Con Edison Steam Department

This is a very nasty steam leak on a twenty-four-inch steam main with eight feet of cover. We have been able to excavate 95 percent of the material and remove 60 percent of the housing but were unable to complete due to the steam leak. Con Edison will shut down the steam main Thursday night so the remaining housing and soil can be removed. Once removed, the asbestos crew will remove the insulation. If time allows the welders will attempt to make a temporary repair on the main.

Broadway, south of Thirty-Ninth Street

Client: Con Edison Steam Department

At this location we will be insulating the twenty-four-inch steam main, then building the housing over the main. The length of the housing is twelve feet. The housing is built with 5000 psi concrete

and #6 epoxy rebar. The concrete will be poured sometime in the a.m. with a Zim portable mixing truck.

Fifty-Ninth Street and First Avenue

Client: Con Edison Steam Department

This is a new project starting this morning. A twenty-four-inch main valve manhole requiring a new anchor, main valve, and slip joint. In order to break out the manhole we will have to install temporary anchoring for the existing main valve. This will turn out to be a very large excavation located directly under the Queensboro (Fifty-Ninth Street) Bridge.

World Trade Center Freedom Tower

Client: Port Authority of New York

Work continues on the installation of the four main permanent electrical feeds to the World Trade Center Freedom Tower.

World Trade Center Tower 4

Client: ECS/Verizon

Work continues with the installation of the primary communications duct banks and manhole for WTC Tower 4.

Bradhurst Avenue

Client: Con Edison Gas Department

Work continues on the installation of high-pressure, twelve-inch-diameter, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) gas main.

Norwalk, Connecticut

Client: Northeast Utilities

Work continues on the installation of six-inch HDPE distribution gas main. **DC**



New York City, Freedom Tower, 2012



When the Call Came on September 11, Danella Was There

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center, Danella Companies was one of a handful of key contractors called upon to put New York City back on line again. The devastation witnessed by Jim Danella and his team, which included Peter Mazzari and his New York-based utility restoration crew, was beyond comprehension. "The sights and smells live with me to this date," said Mazzari. But the crews spent little time pondering the collapse of the towers, and instead immediately sprang into action to lend whatever support was needed. Danella's work at the site has continued to this day as the company is relocating gas and steam mains, and installing electrical feeds to the Freedom Tower, as well as communications duct banks and manholes for the World Trade Center.



Answering the Call— Danella Line Services

When a communications company needs to complete a fiber optic installation project ASAP, when a cable TV provider needs to carry its cable on the underside of a bridge and across a river, and when a government agency needs construction specialists to rebuild a twelve-by-twelve manhole and run critical cable lines to a nearby power station, who is versatile enough to answer the call?

Danella Line Services Company, Inc.

This Danella division was launched in 1985, specifically to dive into the burgeoning telecommunications industry, setting telephone poles and doing buried cable work for commercial and residential customers alike. It was the next logical step for a go-to utility builder, and Danella took it.

In 1987, two years after it was officially launched, Danella Line Services was so successful that it split from Danella Construction to become its own Danella “Inc.” The evolution had more to do with business strategy than with mere volume. Danella Construction spun off Danella Line Services Company, Inc. so that the separate entity could accept nonunion work. Such a strategic move was not new to the history of Danella. By

“We keep doing our job until the customer is satisfied.”

the 1980s, the realities of the marketplace called for the flexibility to bid on union and nonunion contracts alike. As Jim Danella explains, the practice of creating nonunion divisions that shadow the work and purpose of union divisions was never intended to break up any unions. Danella



Companies has always been proudly affiliated with many unions, including the Teamsters, Laborers, and unions representing operating engineers and electricians, to name just a few. None of the Danella companies has ever suffered a strike. Yet without the capability to field nonunion companies, Danella could never have grown nationally. By the 1980s, there were many contracts and many opportunities from which a strictly union operation would have been barred. If the Danella brand was going to grow at a critical time, the company had to be in a position to bid on both union and nonunion contracts. For example, Danella, Inc. in New Jersey was set up for nonunion work contracts, and Clite was the nonunion arm of Counties Corporation in Delaware. The same basic logic—follow the work, then set up companies that match the opportunity—had been used for years to justify establishing Danella in various states when contract bid proposals required a state-based business location. The point is that Danella Companies continues to do what it has always done: whatever is necessary to meet the requirements of the available work contracts.

Two years after starting, Danella Line Services moved to a separate office on Conshohocken Road in Plymouth Meeting, just over three miles from company headquarters on Butler Pike. At the time, the company was three years into a five-year contract to set telephone poles for Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania, now Verizon. Bob Brust, who joined Danella in 1984, was named general manager in 1986 and was subsequently promoted to division manager and vice president of the division. To help run the new division, John Walti came to work for the company after retiring from Bell Telephone. Jim Danella considered Walti an ally and a mentor, crediting him as “someone who would always steer me in the right direction when I was dealing with his company . . . he helped me understand what had to be done.” For his part, Walti always believed that the Danella firm was an excellent contractor, and he was instrumental in securing the nonunion work Danella Line Services was set up to pursue.

Pete Marone, who had joined Danella as a foreman in 1982, was the company’s operations manager when Danella Line Services began work on the Bell contract. It was buried cable work, which at the time meant the installation and maintenance of extensive copper cable wiring. The

lucrative contract came as a boon to the company, Marone says. Back then, he recalled, “Everything, all communications, worked off of copper. We always had a lot of work for installation, repair, and maintenance. Danella Line Services grew considerably from that contract, and anything buried back then was copper cable. There was a lot of it, too. At one time, we had eight crews going out every day. We were big on buried cable for a long time.”

By 1991, when Chris Straubel moved from Danella Construction to serve as a superintendent with Danella Line Services, the division was poised for even more dramatic growth. But it would hardly be business as usual. Having rapidly built a formidable reputation installing and maintaining a copper communications infrastructure, Danella realized the communications industry was determined to convert from copper wire to fiber optics. It had to. Fiber offered tremendous technological advantages over copper, especially in an era on the cusp of a sweeping digital transformation. Fiber optic lines not only transmit data much faster over longer distances than copper, the cable is smaller in size, lighter to handle, and less expensive to install. Whereas copper is vulnerable to radio frequency interference (RFI) and electromagnetic interference (EMI), fiber optics is immune. In general, fiber cabling uses less power and suffers less signal degradation than copper.

Fiber Optics: Challenge and Opportunity

Danella recognized both the benefits and the inevitability of the fiber optics revolution—and the leadership of the company also understood that they would need to acquire new expertise to serve this revolution. The basic difference in installation, says Marone, was staggering when moving from a four-inch copper cable to a *half-inch* fiber cable. A company that had been “digging ditches” was now determined to become a leader in the new “trenchless technology,” in which cut and cover—digging a trench, laying a



Chris Straubel, hired 1970, and Dave Aversano, hired 1973, DLSI

cable, then covering it over—was replaced by an array of directional boring techniques. These required new know-how as well as new equipment. According to Brust, even as the fiber revolution was getting under way, Danella Line Services also added, in 1992, conduit work to the buried-cable work it was doing for Bell. “We probably picked up ten or twelve crews when we added that contract to Danella Line Services,” says Brust. Moreover, as if to certify the wisdom of Danella’s growth strategy, Bell Telephone awarded a contract to Danella Line Services in 1992—the very same year in which Danella Construction lost its bid to renew the very same contract. In Danella’s prevailing spirit of always following the work, many employees moved from Danella Construction to work for Danella Line Services. “They were all foremen who had worked on Bell projects for all these years, and they had to move,” said Cheryl Guffey, one of the longtime employees handling invoicing and payroll for Danella. “It was a little bit of a difficult transition. The bread and butter of our work shifted to another entity, and Danella PA had to go out and get other customers. We were fortunate, because Line Services subbed some of the work back to us. It actually worked out fine.”

In 2000, Danella Line Services opened an office in Delaware and within three years had a completely new assignment from Verizon: installation of infrastructures for fiber optic and FiOS (bundled fiber optic services, such as television, Internet, and phone service over a fiber optic network). Danella Line Services expansion continued when the division landed a new contract with Delmarva Power in 2007, which expanded into the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 2009. By this time, clients also included Comcast, CableVision, Jersey Central Power & Light, Verizon, and Delmarva Power.

Straubel, for one, loved the diversity that came with working for Danella Line Services. “We definitely had more variety in our work than other Danella divisions,” he says, “and it really was an opportunity to learn about a lot of different things.” In rapid fire, he ticks off a list: placing poles, putting up aerial cable, pulling fiber and FiOS cables underground and across bridges, working to place duct and pull fibers next to railroad lines.

Brust and Straubel both recall the incredible rush of the 1990s dot-com era, when fulfilling Danella Line Service contracts for communications companies meant meetings at five in the morning, long nights, and sometimes a dozen crews working on adrenaline-fueled deadlines. “It was challenging, to say the least,” Straubel recalls. He cites by way of example one especially difficult job near Princeton, New Jersey. It involved, Straubel says, “an unbelievable amount of cable to place and splice in thirty days. There was a lot of digging and directional boring and working around the clock.” Did the crews come through? “The fact that we met the deadlines—and received a note from our customers that we met all the deadlines—really said a lot about the work ethic around here,” Straubel answers. “Planning something, making it happen, getting it done safely, and making money—you package all that together, and it’s pretty satisfying.”

Work Ethic

That work ethic is one of the things Straubel most highly values about working for Danella. “It’s the stability,” he says. “I guess Jim’s determination to be service-oriented and customer-oriented means that we keep doing our job until the customer is satisfied, and hopefully we do it right the first time. Our customers like the fact that we’ve made it



through some tough times. People talk about how loyal the staff is to Jim, but he's also loyal to us. He knows whether the guy is a foreman or a superintendent, that they worked as a laborer or a truck driver, and he can count on them to suck it up and keep going in tough times."

Dave Aversano has worked his entire adult life with Danella. Jim's cousin, he joined the company as a laborer in 1973, when it was still called Faulkner Construction. After nearly two decades working as a crew member in construction, Aversano began working for Danella Line Services in 1990. He's been with the division ever since and is now a superintendent.

A colorful character with a reputation as a practical joker and a gift for making even the most mundane occurrence seem hilarious, Aversano turns serious when he defines a "good crew as someone who watches your back." He recalls, "We used to go out—three-, four-man crews—and we had to jackhammer two truckloads a day, by hand. The company only had one backhoe, so we did it all by hand. Today, a laborer runs a jackhammer

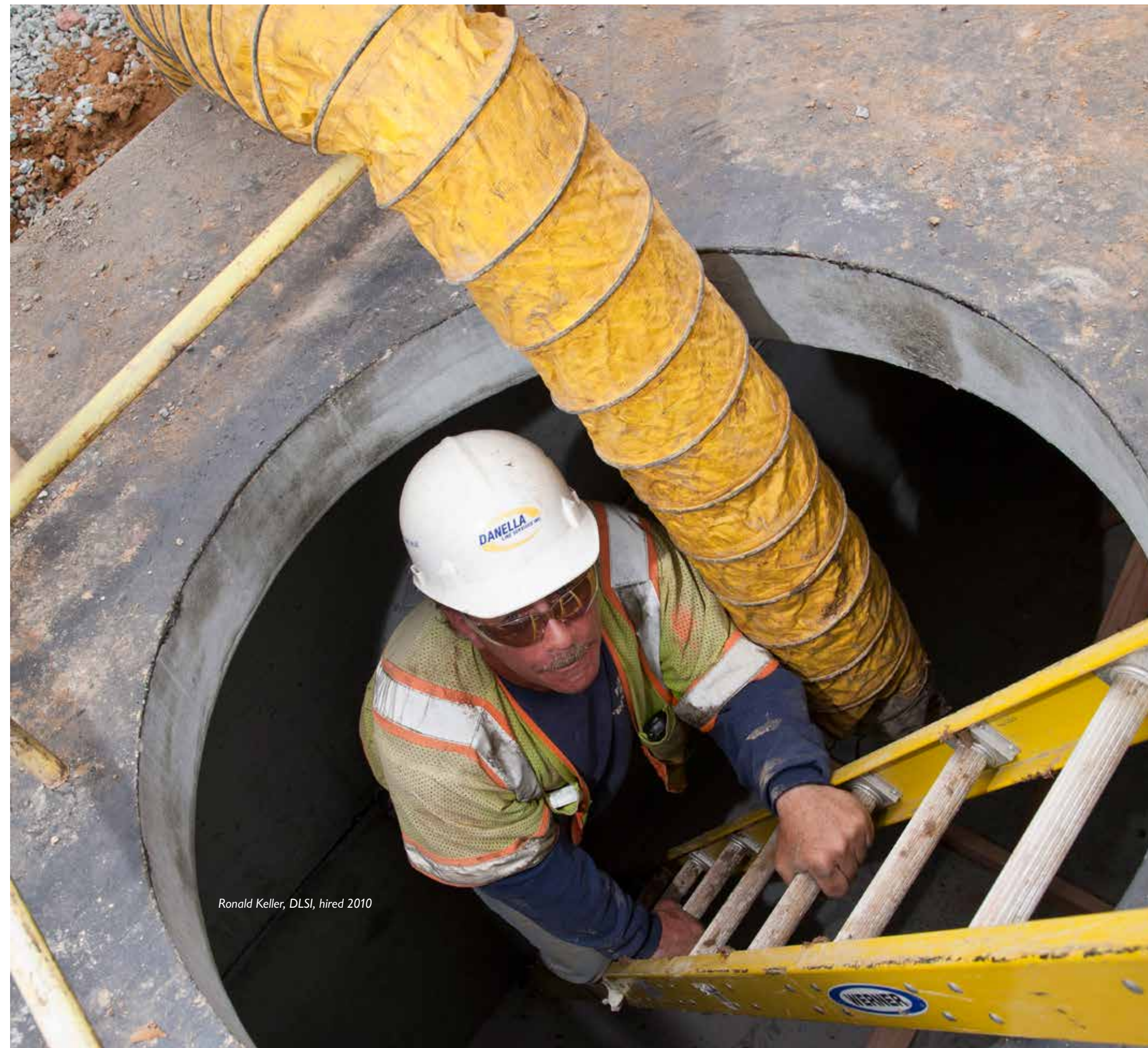
for thirty minutes or so and he thinks he's done a full day's work. And everyone is looking for a backhoe!" That memory of hard work brings Aversano more pride than pain. "You don't say anything bad about Danella to me, 'cause I'll defend him. I know the guy who built it and I know how hard he worked. We are proud of the company, and it's not just a job, it's not just a contract. This is *our* contract, *I* work for Danella, and *I'm* proud of it. No one is going to take that away from us."

Today, Danella Line Services operates out of Plymouth Meeting and in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; in Newark and Harrington, Delaware; in Dryden and East Syracuse, New York, in Farmingdale, New Jersey, and a yard in Elkton, Maryland. In addition to its work in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the division that started with a single Bell Telephone contract is now the single-source contractor for Bell's successor, Verizon, in Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Washington, DC, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

According to Brust, crews work at thirty-five to forty-six sites each and every day. Yet, because he's surrounded by so many long-term employees, like Aversano, Straubel, Marone, and Matt Sarmiento, Brust doesn't feel that anything truly essential has changed at Danella Line Services, not in its nearly three decades. "Our safety culture has changed for the better," he concedes, "and obviously we are larger. But I would say that nothing else has changed. We still have that mentality that Jim always taught us, that the customer is always right. From the time I started working here, we would do anything the customer asked us to do. With Danella Line Services, it's not lip service. It's what we've always done. And it's what we'll continue to do." **DC**



Dave Aversano at a job site in Delaware



Ronald Keller, DLSI, hired 2010

Doug Baden, F. Daniel, hired 1982



DRSI Garage,
Conshohocken Road:
Left to right:
Phil Hickman,
Eddie Lockhart,
Bob Carroll,
Pete Kehs,
John Villante,
Mike DeLark



DRSI Garage
Left to right:
Chip Tarnetta,
Frank McKay,
Marty DeSantis,
Dan Giordano,
Tom McArthur,
Fred Cloheys,
Brian Kerper

Joe McGann, DCC-PA, hired 1978



James Collins II, F. Daniel, hired 1993



Carmen Danella and Mike Zappone



Danny Marsano, DCC-PA, hired 2011

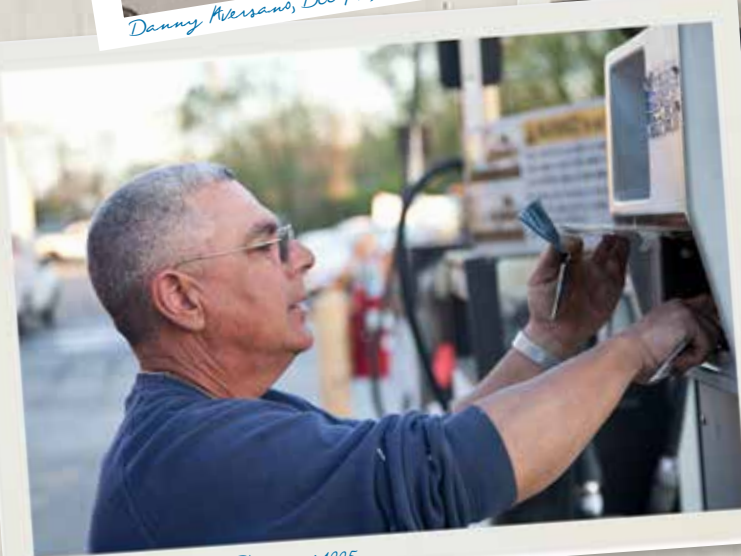
Tony Padilla, DRSI-CO, hired 1999



Earl Freund, DCC-PA, hired 1992



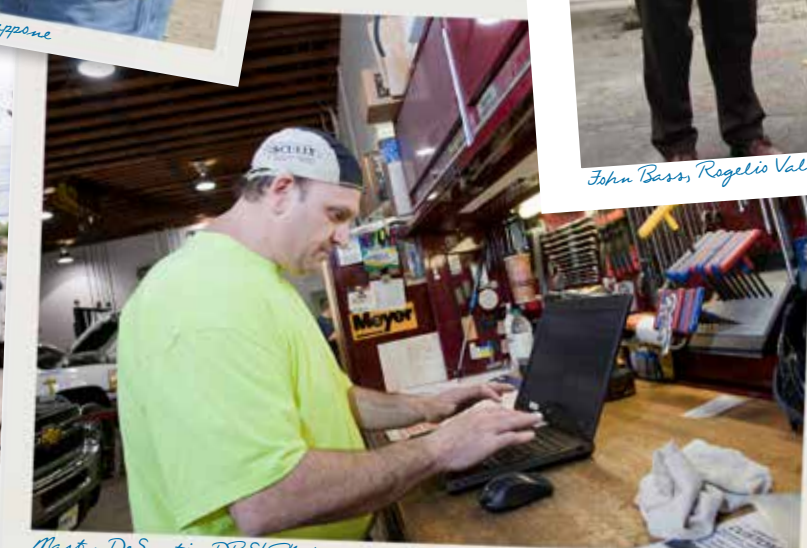
John Bass, Rogelio Valencia, Charlie Agui, Jim Danella, Peter Mazzari, and Dennis Daly



Dave Castagno, DCC-PA, hired 1995



Jose Claudio, DCC-PA, hired 1989



Marty DeSantis, DRSI-PA, hired 1981



Tom McArthur, DRSI-PA, hired 1993



Jesse Serracchio, DCC-PA, hired 1978



Wheels on the Road— Danella Rental Systems

What do you do with costly trucks and equipment when the construction business slows down, as it naturally does, in the winter months? For several years, Jim Danella had casually rented idle equipment out to railroad and transit companies in Pennsylvania and New Jersey—until, in 1986, it became apparent to him that there was a real business here. Danella officially inaugurated a new division, Danella Rental Systems, Inc., which turned unused equipment into an important profit center for Danella Companies.

“From my perspective, getting into the rental business was born of necessity,” says Paul Barents, who has been division manager and vice president of Danella Rental Systems, Inc. since its start. “In the early 1980s, as Jim was continuing to develop the company, he discovered that he could rent some of the trucks that weren’t being used during the winter months, when the construction business in the Northeast slowed

“You have to be ready to walk.” down. The banks don’t care if construction slows down—they still want their money. Jim heard that Amtrak rented trucks. Jim met with the folks from Amtrak, trying to get business from them in the winter. He succeeded and started renting equipment to the railroad. I don’t know at the time if he had a vision of a larger rental company in mind—my first thought is that he didn’t, that he was just trying to pay the bills—but, nevertheless, the rental business grew from there.”



Jim Danella



Danella Auction

Semper Fi

A former U.S. Marine Corps first lieutenant, rifle platoon leader in Vietnam, and a Purple Heart recipient, Barents enjoys a unique relationship with Jim Danella. The two first met in the early 1980s while both were taking Tae Kwon Do classes, a form of Korean martial arts. Nervous before a Tae Kwon Do advancement test, Danella says he looked on in amazement as Barents, who lost both legs after being wounded in Vietnam, completed his test with consummate confidence and skill. “If he can do that, I can pass the yellow belt test, for God’s sake,” Danella recalls. “Paul Barents helped me build my confidence and go out on the floor.” He passed the test and graduated from white belt to yellow belt. Danella and Barents continued through twelve levels of testing together to both achieve the status of second-degree black belt.

Danella asked Barents to come work for his company. In fact, he asked three different times before Barents finally said yes. He started out reviewing repair invoices for the rental fleet, which in 1984 numbered about a hundred vehicles. “We really didn’t have a name—

we were just the ‘rental people,’” says Barents, who worked alongside Vince Venezia in his first days with the company. “We had two primary contracts—with Conrail, a major freight railroad in the Northeast, and New Jersey Transit.” In those early days, short-term rentals were Danella’s only market. Conrail, for instance, rented equipment from April 1 to mid-October, November 1 at the very latest. “I remember telling Jim, if we made it to Thanksgiving with Conrail, it would be a good year,” Barents recalls, “and we were fortunate enough to start to make our rental business grow.”

Barents says he advised potential new employees back in those days that Danella Companies was “not IBM or GM, where you might be a clerk, then a supervisor, then director, then vice president. It just doesn’t work that way. We don’t have titles. So, for crying out loud, work hard and you’ll be rewarded.”

In 1985, after Barents had been with Danella Companies for nearly a year, the company decided to bid on a contract to provide seventy-five truck tractors and trailers to the New York City Transit Authority. The

DANELLA RENTAL SYSTEMS’ KEYS TO SUCCESS

Danella Rental Systems has a track record of “doing its best to help our customers do their jobs.” Because the division deals mostly with railroad customers, this means helping them maintain thousands of miles of track, rights-of-way (which includes railroad property along its tracks), bridges, communications, and other railroad structures across the country. According to Paul Barents, the division’s administrative staffs in Colorado and Pennsylvania are continually printing invoices, following up on late payments, preparing customer reports, delivering or picking up trucks and backhoes, fitting its accounting system into the greater Danella system, and generally “doing our humble best to satisfy customer demands and run a profitable business.”

Every day, Danella’s rental fleet transports railroad personnel and materials throughout the nation. The entire fleet, every truck and piece of equipment, is expertly supported by technicians in Colorado and Pennsylvania. They not only maintain the vehicles, they will, on customer

request, design, build, modify, repair, and specially prep equipment as needed. This sets Danella Rental Systems far apart from virtually every other vehicle and equipment rental and leasing company.

Special hi-rail rental equipment Danella has created includes unique on-track cable plow railcars, which were used in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This extraordinary Danella design enabled communications companies to bury their cables alongside railroad tracks, a procedure that avoided the time and expense of acquiring cross-country rights of way. “Danella’s state-of-the-art design emphasized technology without compromising safety and customer satisfaction,” Danella executives noted in a promotional video about the device. Another purpose-built rental railcar incorporated a unique eight-foot-diameter blade to cut through rock encroaching on the right-of-way. This allowed the cable plowing device to follow and continue laying cable at precisely the same distance from the rail tracks. **DC**



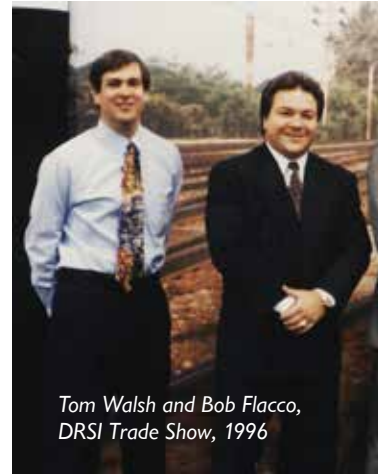
On-track cable plow, plowing innerduct along the Delaware & Hudson Railroad from Port Kent, New York to Rouses Point, New York, early 1990s

process took Barents to what he describes charitably as a “seedy part of Brooklyn, where the guy in charge of the bid wanted to show us the security around the yard, which included a double chain link fence and razor wire.” Barents rolls his eyes as he summons the memory. “It was not some place where I would take my favorite girl to impress her, let me tell you. But this was a big deal for us. Jim’s dad, Carmen, sat in on subsequent meetings with us to discuss how to bid the contract, because it was for a five-year deal and we had never done anything like this.”

In fact, securing the contract proved to be a difficult and contentious ordeal. At one point, an exasperated Jim Danella scooped up the papers and photographs on the table in front of him and announced to the negotiators from the New York City Transit Authority, “I’m not sure we want to go through with this deal. I’m leaving.” That was just the jolt the other side needed to make a counteroffer. With that, a compromise was reached.

“You don’t try to pull that too often,” Danella says years later. “You have to be sincere. And you have to be ready to walk.”

Barents has always remembered that, after Danella won the New York bid, a competing contractor “walked up to me—and he wasn’t very friendly—and said, ‘You guys are never going to make money at that rate.’ He was not a happy guy. And in some respects, he was right. Winning a bid is easy—you fill out the right paperwork and have the right numbers down. But then you have to make it work. The tough part is making money on it, and we had to work hard to make money.”



Tom Walsh and Bob Flacco,
DRSI Trade Show, 1996

Rental Systems Rising

In itself the New York City Transit Authority contract was hard work, but winning it gave Danella huge exposure in the equipment rental arena. Now the company’s rental business really began to grow. The Conrail business in Philadelphia soon expanded south to Washington, DC, and then west to Detroit. The key to expansion, Barents and others said, was Danella’s reputation for delivering exceptional customer service. “We paid a lot of visits to existing customers,” Barents explains. “And that didn’t mean just seeing one person at headquarters in Philly, but talking to guys in the field. Conrail, at the time, might have had five or six separate divisions, and we visited every one to convince them that we had the equipment they needed and we could get it to them. And then you hustle your butt off to make sure you get in there at dawn with the trucks they want. If not, you are holding up the railroad company, and we don’t ever want to be accused of holding up production.”

In 1986, Danella Rental Systems, Inc. became an official division of Danella Companies, Inc., with Barents responsible for launching and growing all aspects of the new line of



business. From the beginning, the division specialized in servicing railroads, transit authorities, railroad contractors, and power utility companies with an extensive standard truck fleet, as well as a hi-rail inventory of light- to heavy-duty trucks and construction equipment—“hi-rail” vehicles being trucks and other equipment modified with retractable flanged steel wheels so that they can ride on railroad tracks in addition to driving (on their standard rubber tires) on roads. Business was good, and the division grew, sprouting major offices in Pennsylvania and Colorado, as well as hub offices in Florida and Ohio. Tim Schilling, who had worked for Danella Companies in New Jersey since 1991, agreed to go to Colorado in February 1993 when Barents asked him to help jumpstart the rental business in the West.

“Danella Rentals didn’t really have much business out west,” says Schilling, now manager of Danella Rental Systems and still based in Aurora, Colorado. “We started calling on railroads, and we are now a railroad-specialized company. We provide work equipment primarily for maintenance-of-way crews and signal construction crews—everything from a pickup truck with rail wheels to bigger pieces of equipment that handle track ties and ballast. We have the hi-rail fleet that goes directly on the rail, and that’s our niche. One of the things that’s an advantage to us is that Paul and I, for all intents and purposes, operate carte blanche. If I see a customer and that customer says, ‘I want you to build a piece of equipment with wheels here and a boom there,’ and I determine that we can make money on it, then I just say yes, and we go do the work. If they say, ‘We need three tie handler trucks,’ I say yes, and I go get them. The way we are structured makes us very agile, and it’s a wonderful way to work, with very few constraints on how we run the business. The only time any discussion takes place is if it is out of the ordinary and it’s a piece of equipment that we are not sure we can use somewhere else. That’s when I talk to Paul, and that’s when we talk to Jim. But, generally, as long as we are making a living and taking care of business, there are very few constraints on how we run the business.”

Barents confirms that operating autonomously within Danella Companies is one of the things he likes most about working for Jim Danella. “It wasn’t really a career path as much as an opportunity,” said Barents.



Danella Rental Systems trade show display

“Jim gives his people the opportunity to make things grow, to do what they want to do—within reasonable limits.”

For example, when the rental business was just starting up, Danella offered only single-axle dump trucks and single-axle cranes. Barents saw a market for a tandem-axle dump truck, bought one, and has never looked back. “We took a chance,” he says of the initial quarter-million-dollar investment, “because we were willing to take a risk in order to grow.”

Like all other Danella businesses, Danella Rental Systems has a

history of moving into markets where management saw money to be made—and not being afraid to move out again, when profits dwindled or failed to materialize in the first place. Although Barents operated successfully for nearly a decade in Canada, that country’s relatively short construction season and long-distance landscapes eventually made it too difficult to maintain an efficient operation. Danella closed its rental operation there in 2003. While the Colorado office has survived for nearly two decades now, it routinely expands or contracts to reflect

waxing and waning demand. With his current staff, Schilling notes, “We do the best we can to stay very, very lean. We work overtime, we work Saturdays. We have twenty part-time drivers, because when we rent a truck, it doesn’t go from rental to rental. It always comes back to our garage.” Deane Lambert, who handles the maintenance for Danella’s western fleet, ensures that all equipment is thoroughly serviced, rigorous safety checks included. Lambert, who transferred to Danella Rental Systems when Danella Construction Corporation of Colorado, Inc. fulfilled its contracts, has been with the organization since 1989.

During economic downturns, Schilling admits, the key to staying in business is “to streamline and reduce your bank note and your depreciation.” Then he adds, “But you have to be careful. It would be simple to go out and sell everything and maybe even make a onetime profit. But you can’t run a candy store if you don’t have any candy. When the economy turned around, we were ready.”



Kevin Nelson, DRSI-CO, hired 2004

YOU WANT IT? DANELLA HAS IT.

With an immense fleet of more than four thousand rental assets, Danella Rental Systems emphasizes safety, flexibility, and service. Whether customers wish to rent short-term or long-term, to enter into a rental-purchase arrangement or an extended lease, Danella is committed to accommodating their needs. This includes such services as helping the customer write specifications for equipment to ensure a perfect fit with his needs and to providing on-site training once the equipment is delivered. The guiding principle is service above all—and it is a principle that distinguishes Danella Rental Systems from all competitors.

Over the years, Danella Rental Systems has become the go-to source for the rental of hi-rail vehicles—those specially equipped trucks and equipment that ride down ordinary roadways as well as railroad tracks and service the railroads. “That’s our big niche,” says Tom Walsh, vice president of operations, Danella Rental Systems. “We do business with Class 1 railroad companies. We deliver single items or we deliver a package of equipment to the railroad that includes eight to ten pieces—a truck, a backhoe, a dump truck, trailer, crew truck, utility truck, supervisor’s pickup, crane truck. And we can create any package that meets the needs of the customer. That’s one of the things at which we excel.” **DC**





Paul Barents, DRSI Vice President

In 1987, all of Danella Rental Systems was just a three-person operation. Today, there are forty full-time staff and twenty-five part-timers, with the Danella rental fleet now servicing all of the lower forty-eight states and even venturing into Alaska from time to time. Barents and his staff oversee an inventory of more than four thousand assets, ranging from pickup trucks and passenger vans to utility trucks and work/construction/specialty equipment, including an extensive hi-rail fleet. Regular customers include Class 1 freight railroads and passenger railroads. Over time, Danella Rental Systems has built a solid reputation based on timely service, high-quality and safe equipment, reasonable rates, and a willingness to really work with customers.

“I’ll Work with You, Every Single Day”

“In the last three or four years, I’ve gotten into the habit—much to the annoyance of others—of telling customers I can give them three things: the best equipment out there, the best service, and the cheapest rates—but I can’t give you all three at the same time. If I give you the cheapest rates, I won’t be your vendor five years from now because I’ll

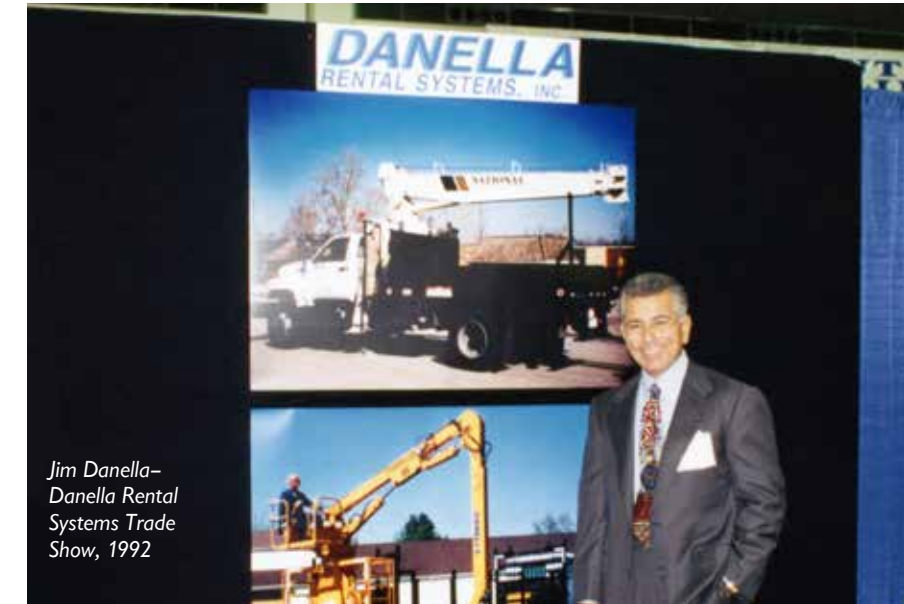
be out of business,” Barents quotes himself. “So I’ll give you reasonable, competitive rates, along with the best service and the best equipment. And I’ll work with you, every single day.”

That service, Barents notes, depends on a remarkable, seasoned team at Danella Rental Systems. Pat Donahue and Ted Hawkins handle all customer calls and orders. “They will call on a Thursday and say, ‘I need a truck in Savannah, Georgia, on Monday,’ and we have to make sure it leaves here on Sunday.” Donahue and Hawkins coordinate orders with Rick Huebner, the maintenance manager, to make sure the rental trucks are ready to go. In addition to taking care of Danella’s own fleet of trucks and specialized equipment, Huebner runs Danella’s truck garage on Butler Pike.

Phil Hickman runs Danella Rental Systems’ other maintenance facility, which is on Conshohocken Road. Here, construction equipment—known in the industry as “yellow iron”—is prepped for rental by a dedicated team of mechanics. Hickman’s predecessor, Arny Faust, set the high standard of quality and service that is a Danella hallmark. Faust retired in 2009 after forty-five years, first with Carmen Danella at his Asphalt Paving company, next with Danella Construction



Tim Schilling—Danella Rental Systems Trade Show, 1992



Jim Danella—Danella Rental Systems Trade Show, 1992

Corporation of PA, and finally with Danella Rental Systems.

“We just kept everything running. That’s what I personally contributed to this company: we just keep everything running,” says Faust, who first met Jim Danella when they were both in high school and Danella worked fixing tires in his father’s maintenance shop. “Trucks, backhoes, rollers, trenchers, the Blue Goose, graders, dump trucks, bulldozers—any equipment, we kept it running.” How? “We just did the best we could,” Faust says. “You didn’t have much time to think about it because there was always another job waiting. We always knew our starting time, but there were days when we never knew a quitting time. Whatever the job required, we gave it.”

Faust is quick to note that he didn’t work alone, pointing out that as many as five mechanics were working with him in his garage at the time of his retirement. Today, there are nine mechanics working with Huebner on Butler Pike, including John Staffi, who has been with Danella for thirty years. “Aerial devices, cranes, bucket trucks, specialty track inspection vehicles—I work on the specialty equipment for the railroads,” says Staffi, who not only repairs but also often builds and upfits trucks to meet client specifications. “We rely on maintenance service to repair

equipment once it’s in the field, and I do a lot of field training, which is one of my fortes. But we like to have a piece of equipment back here every so often, so we know for certain it is up to our standards and above par.”

Barents agrees with Faust and Staffi that running a maintenance facility is a team effort. “All of our mechanics are very key to what Danella Rental Systems does,” says Barents. “They are in the background all the time, and the work they do is not glamorous. But it’s critically important.”

The pride and care that Danella puts into its vehicles is unmistakable and clearly recognized by those outside the company. Longtime Danella employee Paul Rossi now manages the Danella Used Truck & Equipment Sales lot, which does a brisk business in secondhand vehicles. As Tom Walsh, vice president of operations at Danella Rental Systems, points out, the division’s annual equipment auction used to be considered a “junk auction” when Danella started it in 1989 at its yard in Conshohocken. Now, however, “we are considered one of the best auctions around because



Tim Schilling and Deane Lambert, Denver, Colorado, 2012

BUILDING A DREAM THE STORY OF DANELLA COMPANIES, INC.

our equipment is some of the best-maintained.” The yearly spring auction features from 175 to 250 pieces of equipment. “We have a great garage, and those guys, led by Rick Huebner and Phil Hickman have a lot on their shoulders. They do an amazing job.”

But throughout Danella Companies, it is Paul Barents to whom nearly everyone points when they want to explain just why the division has been so successful.

“I began working for Paul in 1987,” when it was a three-person operation with 400 to 500 pieces of equipment to rent,” says Walsh. “He is an excellent division manager, in my opinion. He is the hardest-working man I’ve ever seen—very honest, very forthright, very intelligent, and very fair. And he’s a good negotiator, I’ll tell you that.

He has the respect of all the people in our department today—and the respect of everyone throughout the company.”

Schilling agrees. “The thing I enjoy most about working for Danella is Paul Barents. Absolutely. We often have completely different ways of looking at things. But it works well—like spit and polish. I’m spit. He’s polish.”

When he looks back on the development of the Danella Companies, Jim Danella counts the development of the rental business as one of the major milestones in the history of the firm. “Paul inspired so many others in the company, and he is a leader in a group of hard-working people who helped me build this company. There’s only one thing about Paul that’s difficult: He makes everything look easy.” **DC**



Chip Tornetta, DRSI-PA



DRSI's garage in Aurora, Colorado



Lisa Dandon, J. Daniel, hired 2005



Stan Steinberg, hired 1982



Elizabeth Barnes, DCC-FL, hired 2006



Paul Knight, Danella Atlantic, hired 1986



Trisha Travis, Danella HQ, hired 2007



Dwane Walker, DRSF-CO, hired 2000



Tom Walsh, DRSF-TX, hired 1987



Price Jackson and Joe Hemple



Fory Kudlesky, DCC-TX, hired 2004



Arny Faust, DRSF-TX, hired 1967, at the 2008 Auction



Bektes Gurm, Danella HQ, hired 1997



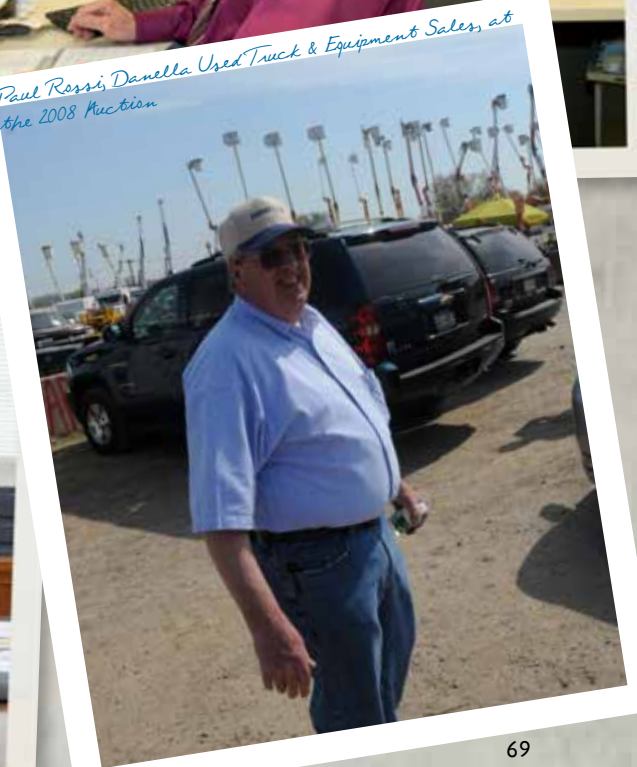
Brandy Meader, J. Daniel, hired 2001



Rich Neas, Vice President, DCC-TX, hired 1982

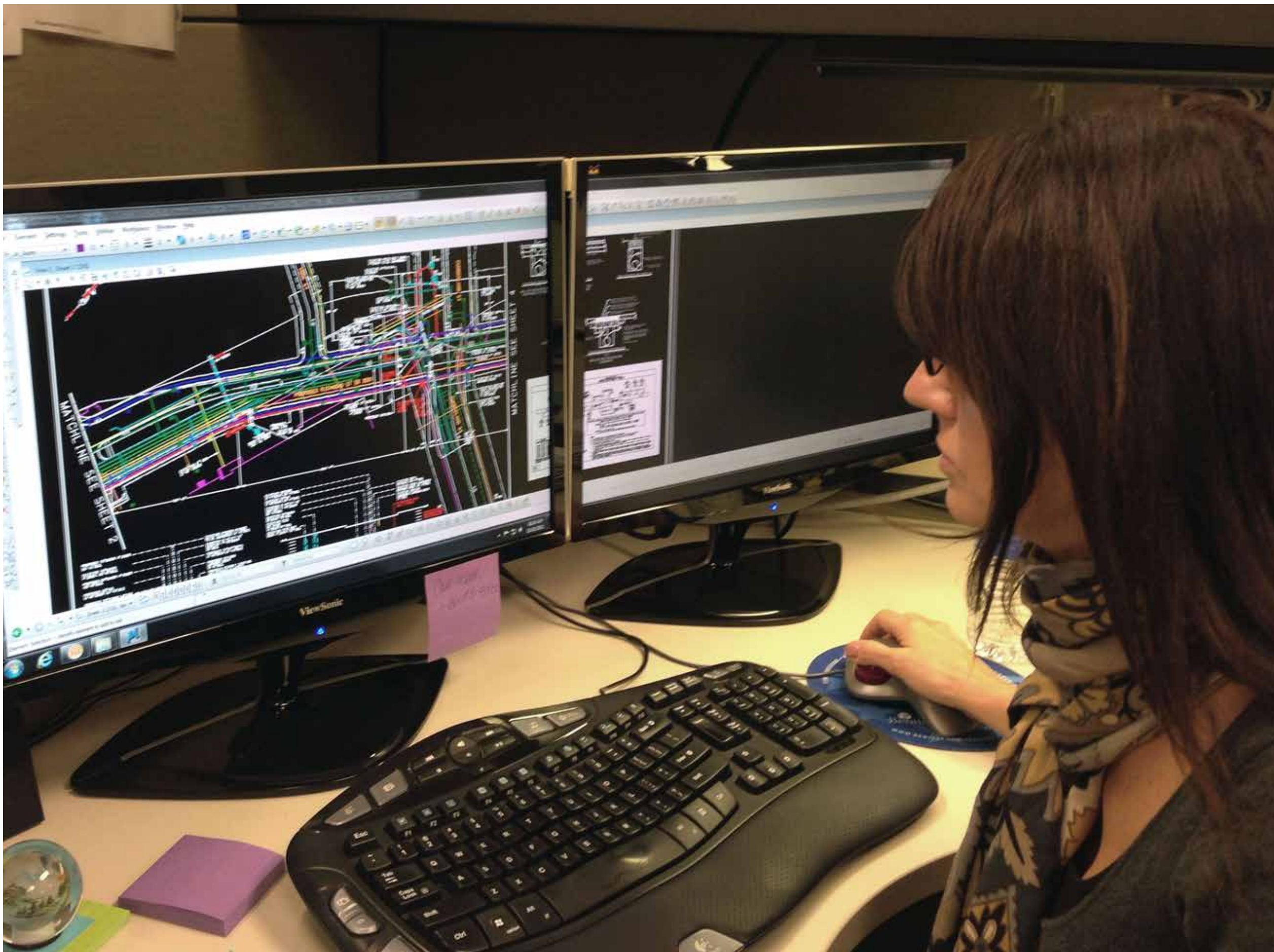


Paul Rorri, Danella Used Truck & Equipment Sales, at the 2008 Auction



Whitney Frizell, DCC-FL, hired 2000





Turnkey Solutions— Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation

You or your company has purchased a piece of property. You need to build, to get a shovel into the earth. You look out over the tract and the streets adjacent to it. Where, you wonder, are the utility infrastructures—gas, electric, water, sewer, cable—under the ground you’ve just acquired? Utilities have drummed into us all, “Call before you dig.” So you pick up the phone.

But what if you are the utility company? And what if you have just been asked to create a new electrical distribution plan for an entire business complex, new residential community, or a congested center-city neighborhood? Who do you call to find out what telecommunication conduits, structured cabling systems, and utility pipes are under the ground?

“Because when you need them, they’re here.” Who will tell you exactly where they are? How do you determine which systems are active? Which systems are viable? Which ones are out of date? How can you figure out how much it will cost to install an entirely new electrical distribution design? Who do you call?

Since 1998, utilities have been calling Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation, a Danella engineering division that offers an innovative array of services to its utility, building, and construction clients. The division specializes in outside and inside plant engineering services as well as engineering, consulting, and locating services for utility firms in the



Fran Devine and Bill McLaughlin

From Tangent to Danella Engineering

In one respect, the new division started out much like every other Danella business: Jim Danella saw an opportunity to grow the company, and he acted upon it. It is also true, however, that Danella Engineering evolved from an earlier Danella company named Tangent Associates. It was run by Dan McNeil, a former AT&T employee. Tragically, McNeil was stricken by cancer, and Tangent began to struggle. He lost his battle with the disease in September 1998. That same year, another AT&T employee, Tom Brady, retired from the company and was recruited by Jim Danella to work for him at the Plymouth Meeting office. His first big assignment was to give Tangent a new name and turn it into a viable business.

“Dan had been very sick, and the company was in a state of flux,” Brady recalls. But Brady and Jim Danella agreed that the premise behind Tangent was solid: to be a full-service, turnkey organization that offered utilities everything from engineering feasibility studies to construction management.

“It didn’t take us long to get the company renamed as Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation and to get our foot in the door as a major entity,” says Brady. Because Dan McNeil had been a good friend to both Brady and Jim Danella, Brady recalls that it “was a sad time. His death hurt us both. But it’s a tribute to Danny that the

business went from a real struggler to a very good business.”

When Brady joined Danella, he already had a good idea of the firm’s values. While at AT&T, he and McNeil had regularly hired Danella Construction for telecommunications work, starting in 1976. The projects ranged from digging ditches and laying simple communications cables in residential areas to racing against the clock to put in a complicated fiber optic cable along the Massachusetts Turnpike en route to Canada in time for the 1976 Summer Olympics, which were held in Montreal. “Dan and Tom—they were our face at AT&T,” Jim Danella explains. “Those two guys could say, ‘You work for us’ or ‘You don’t work for us.’ I’ve always been grateful that they said one more than the other.”

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telecommunications, power, gas, and water industries. Almost immediately after it was established in 1998, Danella Engineering became known for its expertise in a wide range of areas, including feasibility studies, construction management, design engineering, structured cabling services, and general consulting. As the engineering division grew, the construction divisions within Danella itself turned to it, their own in-house organization, to provide complete engineering design, build, and turnkey solutions for company projects.

UNIQUE INNER-CITY PROJECT SHOWCASES DANELLA ENGINEERING EXPERTISE

Feasibility studies are often carried out on a grand scale. Danella Engineering handled one of the grandest when an electric utility provider asked the company’s engineers to create a conceptual electrical distribution design plan for an inner-city manufacturing and business development that was undergoing renovations. The client called for a feasibility study of the utility systems across the entire area.

There were unique surprises. First, Danella engineers discovered five different voltages operating within the unusual urban environment, which was a campus-like collection of manufacturing, office, and industrial buildings. This was followed by another revelation—some of the different voltages went into a substation at a certain voltage, only to come out at a different voltage level. “We had to make the client aware of this as soon as we figured it out,” explains William McLaughlin, operations manager for Danella Engineering. This was an unexpected finding, and it made “the most difficult part of the job . . . trying to come up with an accurate estimate for the client of what it would cost to upgrade the new facilities.”

Second, although city records are supposed to thoroughly and reliably document service systems on city property, McLaughlin “found that only 60 percent of what was recorded was accurate. And on average, it’s usually 75 to 80 percent. Some of this stuff was old, and some of the records had been lost over the last 150 years. We had crews inspecting manholes, switch areas, and conduits, just trying to gather existing information to determine service voltage, number of phases, demand, location of metering, acceptability, single- or dual-service supply. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack.”

Real-world problems like these meant that the feasibility study took almost a year and required nearly a dozen Danella engineering representatives to complete. But completed it was, and Danella made the results fully actionable by developing a construction schedule that realistically captured the

scope of the project. The Danella cost estimates were sophisticated and included both the direct and indirect costs associated with engineering, project management, and construction.

This unique feasibility study represents just one of the many major projects Danella Engineering tackles every day as a leading provider of utility infrastructure engineering and construction services. Today, the division makes its home in the modern headquarters into which Danella Companies moved in 2002. Here, the engineering workstations are fitted with the very latest in hardware and software technology, including a full array of CADD (computer-aided design and drafting) tools. Armed with state-of-the-art technology, the design engineering crews create CADD drawings, complete base mapping, construction drawings and as-builts, as well as details, profiles, and permit drawings. **DC**



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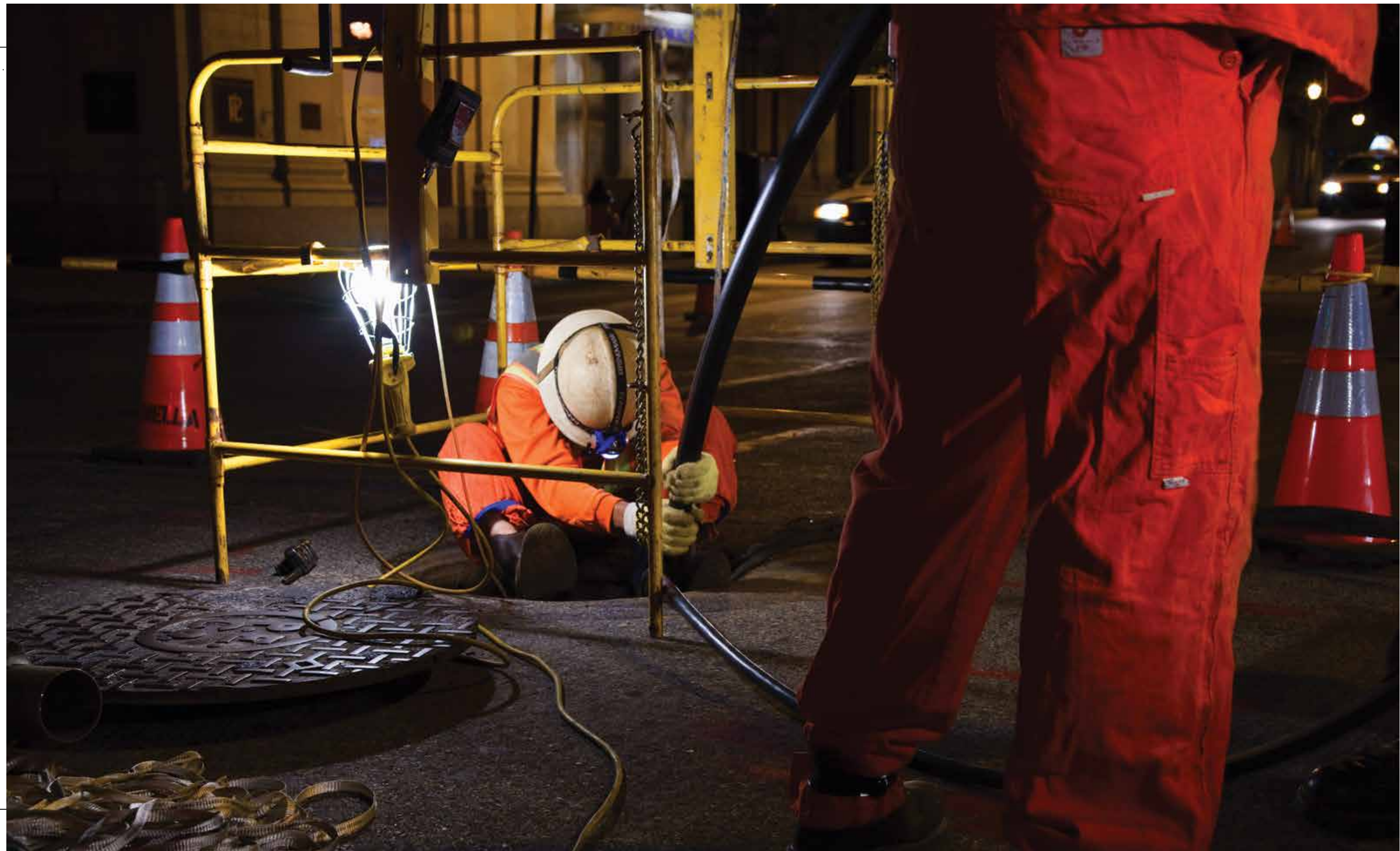
Brady remembers exactly why the pair called on Danella again and again to work with AT&T. “You don’t hire someone who is going to cause you problems, and Jim Danella and Rick Duich and all of their people at the time inspired confidence. The people who worked for me at AT&T would come in and say, ‘I like working for this guy. He does this and this and this, and he gets the job done.’ Jim Danella did a great job, and he was always welcomed back on my jobs.”

After Brady retired from AT&T and joined Danella, he quickly understood what every other Danella executive already knew: the boss gave his division leaders “free reign and authority” to bring in business and get the work done. So Brady quickly set four objectives for Danella Engineering: Get jobs, make money from those jobs, don’t get hurt, and have fun.

“I’ve been through years and years of onerous management-by-objective programs, and the bottom line is to get jobs and keep getting them,” says Brady. “We all know that we are in business to make money, not to write checks. You have to always keep your finger on the market’s pulse because the market changes, and it changes frequently. The only way to make money is to get jobs, know your margins, and know what your costs are.” Then he adds, “And because engineering is an exact science, you’d better be right.”

Brady confesses that his first few months at Danella were challenging. “I had \$100 million budgets at AT&T, but I never had to make a payroll and be responsible for all of these people’s lives.” Working at Danella “was far more intense, even though the budgets were much less.” For guidance, he turned not only to Jim Danella but to outside authorities, including proven management leaders like Tom Peters, author of the classic business leadership book *In Search of Excellence*. Brady wholeheartedly embraces Peters’s basic business premise: Stick to what you do well. “You can make a mistake by becoming all things to all people,” says Brady, “and we chose not to do that.”

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COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM PROJECT

Communications System Project, Atlanta to the Alabama/Mississippi State Lines Design and build a complex communications system over almost three hundred miles? That was the very assignment Danella Engineering and Construction completed in 2010—a three-duct system from Atlanta to the Alabama and Mississippi state line.

The three-duct system was to be placed alongside and in the same private right-of-way as an existing and functioning fiber optic cable and a dead and abandoned coaxial cable. Danella was assigned to execute design engineering, permit acquisition, and construction management, as well as to create the as-built drawings and conduct the closeout of the project. **The Details** At the outset of the project, Danella developed complete base-map information with GPS coordinates of features, and then placed these reference points and conduit systems onto base maps from which Danella CADD specialists could make complete construction drawings for the purposes of securing bids. Since this was a total turnkey project, Danella proceeded to acquire all necessary permits from the relevant state departments of transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and local municipalities. Danella also fielded a right-of-way team to support the client's private right-of-way acquisition effort. Danella worked directly with the client to lead the construction bid process and to select from among the bidders' proposals. Once construction was under way, Danella teams performed all construction management duties on behalf of the client, including inspection and program management. **The Challenges** The project presented two major challenges, one predictable, the other not. The first was a given: Don't hit the live cable. This project made Danella totally responsible for building the new system parallel to two existing cables—one dead, one live. "The biggest challenge was to engineer it and direct construction so that we didn't hit the live cable," says Tom Brady, vice president of Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation. Danella, he well knew, was liable for any damage that might be caused to the existing fiber optic cable, including the cost of service interruptions. "The owner had specifications for working around the cable—and not to cut the cable. If we had mismarked it, we would have had to pay for it." Brady explains that Danella is one of very few engineering and construction firms that provide their employees with special, certified training precisely to address challenging situations like this one.

Now, the second challenge was beyond anyone's power of prediction and control. It was rain, rain, and more rain. The project started in May 2008, and the owner wanted it to be completed by June 2009. But an entire summer of relentless rainfall followed by a winter with record snowfalls dogged the project, delaying the work significantly. Work could not be completed until the spring of 2010. "We had been under a drought for five years, and then the drought was over. The amount of rain and snow we had was uncharacteristic, to say the least. That can't be controlled," says Brady. "In this project, the client was very understanding." It also helped that the client was also very pleased with the project as completed.

Communication System Project from La Plata, Maryland, to Fredericksburg, Virginia To build a communications system from Maryland to Virginia, anchored at the small town of La Plata, Maryland, and the historic community of Fredericksburg, Virginia, required traversing eighty-four miles, some of it under the Potomac River—nearly two miles wide at its narrowest at the point of crossing—some of it across land, and some of it along railroads. For this immensely complex 2009 project, Danella Engineering and Construction Corporation was responsible for design engineering, permit acquisition, and construction management. **The Details** The client allowed less than a one-foot-per-mile error, which meant that surveying and GPS coordination had to be executed to the highest possible standards. Danella decided from the get-go that crossing the Potomac required directional drilling. The company's representatives had to persuade multiple federal, state, and local agencies to permit the client to attempt the directional bore crossing, which was to be carried out by another construction company using Danella's engineering specifications. The method was chosen for the express purpose of avoiding the risks of environmental damage other crossing methods posed. Then it was up to Danella to convince the authorities that the engineers' plan would, in fact, be safe.

It was Danella engineers who were also tasked with developing base map information to determine the path of the communication system, both under water and on land. The procedure was to determine GPS coordinates of features, overlay these reference points and conduit systems onto the base maps, and then use the information to create

construction drawings for bid purposes. Danella's state-of-the-art CADD department provided the necessary hardware and software design services to make the drawings, execute paper-to-digital conversions, complete the base mapping as well as the necessary customization, and carry the plans through to production.

In the meantime, Danella went about the demanding task of meeting an extensive list of requirements to secure environmental permits. This process was complicated by the fact that previous attempts by other companies to cross the river for telecommunications or electrical construction had actually created environmental hazards caused by damage to the delicate riverbed. In addition to successfully pleading the environmental case for a directional-bore crossing, Danella also drew up a full suite of contingency plans, just in case the project caused what is known as "frack outs," in which polluting mud is introduced into the river through fractures created in the riverbed. Danella presented its plans to the Army Corps of Engineers, which applied to them its rigorous environmental standards and issued an approval. This facilitated the subsequent acquisition of all necessary permits from other federal agencies, the state departments of transportation, and county and local municipalities.

With the environmental issues addressed, Danella led the construction bid process. Throughout this and the entire project, Danella, as project manager, supplied the client with detailed weekly reports along with ongoing engineering support, verifying any changes requested by construction contractors during construction. **The Challenges** While a project this big and this environmentally sensitive is bound to pose many challenges, the chief challenge was ensuring the successful development of a directional deepwater bore nearly sixteen feet below the riverbed, which could be completed only from one side of the river, outbound from Maryland, headed to Virginia. In fact, a directional bore of this type had never been attempted for a span of more than 8,100 feet. The record-breaking bore as proposed came in at 9,325 feet. Danella assigned some twenty employees to this project during 2008–2009. Project manager David Craft notes that the Potomac River is "constantly moving and changing, and doesn't have a sound riverbed. It's better to drill in rock, but we didn't have any rock until we arrived on the Virginia side." The project was completed, successfully, on time, and without any adverse environmental impact. **DC**



Work for AT&T across the Potomac River

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Realistic Vision

Yet Brady is the first to admit that he set very ambitious objectives during his first few years at the helm of Danella Engineering. Maybe too ambitious.

“My first goal for Danella Engineering was to be the next Bechtel, the preeminent engineering/construction company in the country,” he recalls. “But 9/11 had something to do with changing our track.”

In fact, the nature of engineering jobs and utility construction work changed dramatically for Danella and many other construction firms in 2001, after the dot-com bubble had burst, after a slew of business investments had tanked, and after the entire country spun into a recession after the terrorists’ attacks on September 11. “Then the focus of everything changed,” Brady says. “Everything turned to an

emphasis on maintenance, not capital construction. Companies knew that if they had a cable in the ground, they had to maintain it because they didn’t want to put in more. And these maintenance dollars are very different from construction dollars. They were pretty up front with it—that the discretionary money would dry up quickly and that the money was in maintenance and restoration.” In the best spirit of Danella pragmatism, Brady maintains, “We went from a company that thrived on discretionary money to one that depended on nondiscretionary money for maintenance.”

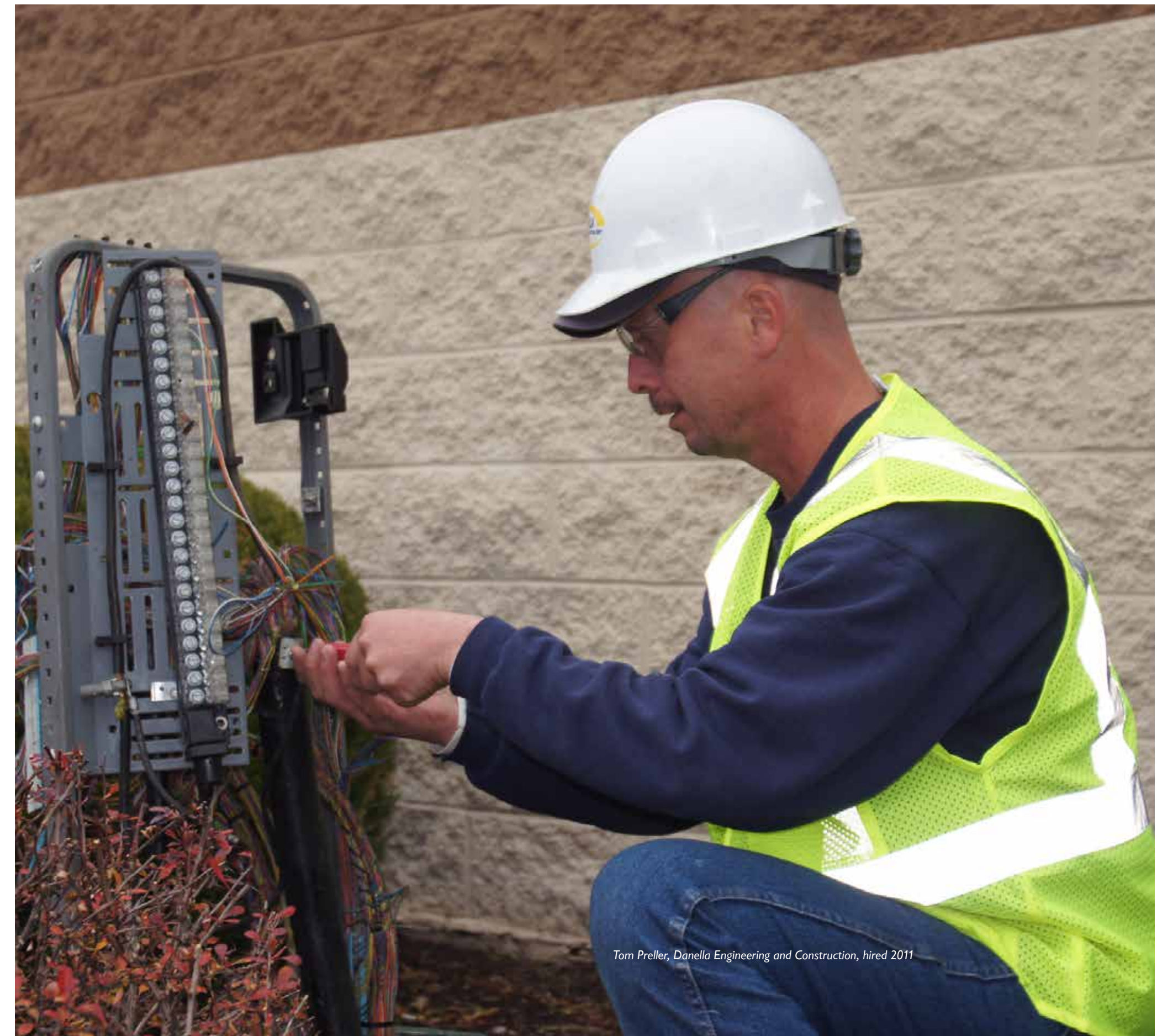
Thanks to realistic vision at the top, Danella Engineering survived the economic downturn by focusing primarily on what Brady calls “anchor tenants”—the reliable companies with a seemingly unlimited number of customers who rely on them for an array of 24/7 services. For Danella



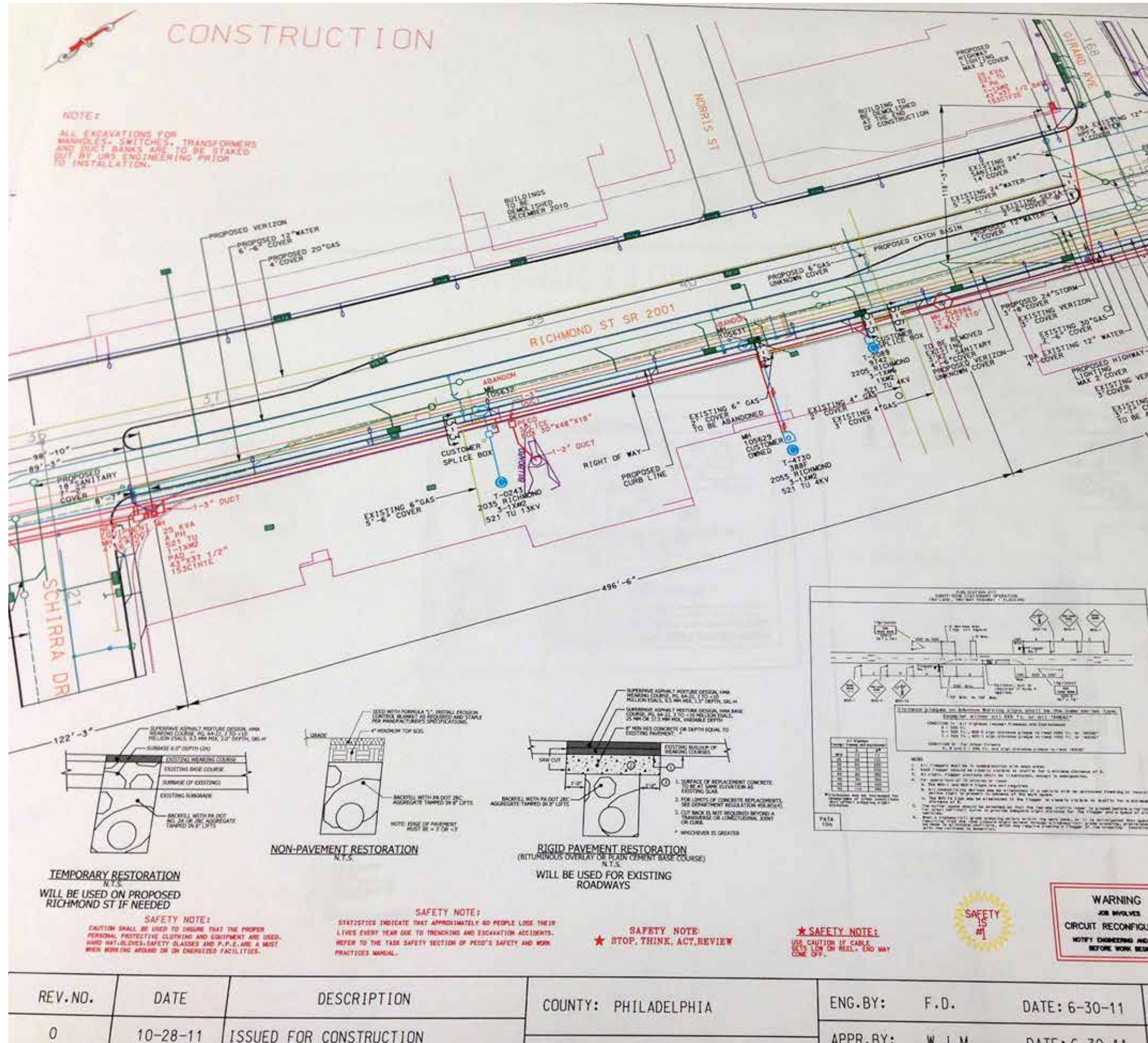
Tom Brady, vice president



Left to right: Tom Higgins, Dolores Higley, Danielle George, Frank Roop, Fran Devine, Anna Thorn-Maestri, Martin Carr, Tom Brady, Claudio Maestri, Bill McLaughlin, Ruel Millares

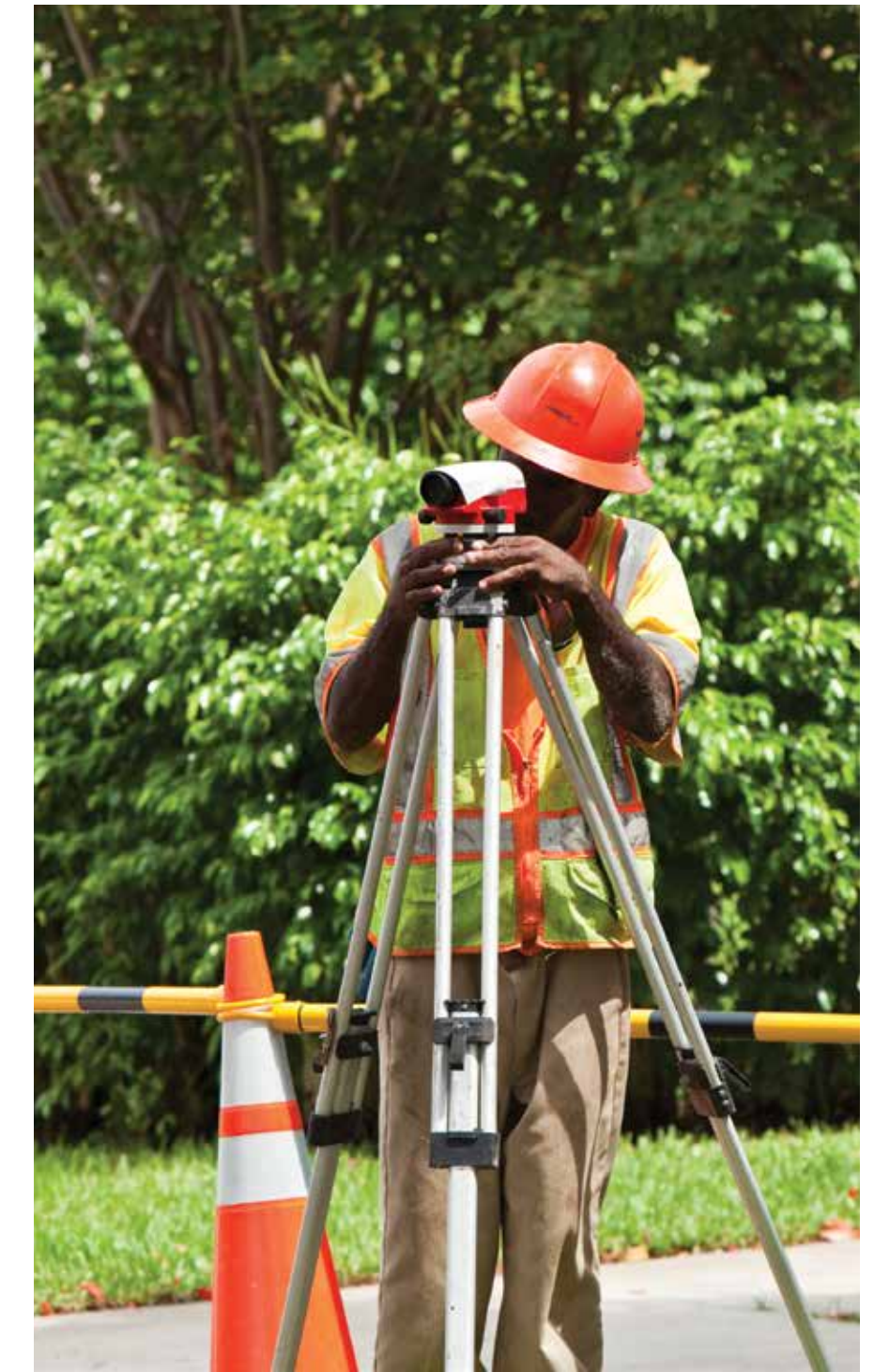


Tom Preller, Danella Engineering and Construction, hired 2011



Engineering, these anchor tenants, including utility and communications giants AT&T, Verizon, Qwest, PECO, and Bell South, to name a few, helped to sustain and even prosper Danella Companies through a roller-coaster economy. As for Danella Engineering, it has today all the resources necessary to undertake any size project for these and other companies—from designing a basic building link to building entire telecommunications and electric utility systems.

As is the practice in Danella Construction, Brady maintains a core Danella Engineering staff, but is always prepared to recruit additional thoroughly vetted engineers, architects, designers, inspectors, project managers, surveyors, and field crews on a work-for-hire basis. At any given time across the country, hundreds, even thousands of highly skilled employees may join the Danella team on an as-needed basis. This is the essence of the division's flexibility. At its core, in addition to Brady, key division leaders include William McLaughlin, operations manager, and Tom Biehl, general manager.



Integrated Solutions and Unquestionable Depth

Yet even while adjusting manpower to suit the market, and even in a less-than-stable economic environment, Danella Engineering has continued to expand its services throughout the country. In a move that mirrors Danella Companies' long history of growth, Brady recently recognized a burgeoning demand for turnkey engineering services specifically tailored to address a client's technology needs, including all aspects of structured cabling (for voice, data, and video signals), wireless, networking, telephony, and security systems. According to Brady, "The smart business model said that this is where we're headed, providing a turnkey service for all these areas." Accordingly, Brady spun off a new engineering division in 2011, Danella Integrated Solutions, Inc., which offers what he calls "total technology solutions." In contrast to cable-only providers, Danella Integrated Solutions is designed to deliver a complete package of services to address everything from digital bandwidth and speed to custom-designed security systems and telephony solutions. Brady asks clients to think of it this way: If there's a wire or a cable in your building that's connected to a utility, computer, telephone, wireless network, security, voice, data, or video system, Danella Integrated Solutions can take care of it with "solutions that are flexible, reliable, and able to meet present and future needs."

After more than thirteen years of operations, the unquestionable depth of Danella's engineering expertise allows the company to tackle diverse assignments. Danella engineers are able to operate directional bores under rivers for utility companies operating in sensitive environments; survey college campuses to locate, design, install, and restore fiber optic cables; perform underground and aerial field investigations for projects in urban and rural settings; and produce environmental impact studies for clients throughout the country while using state-of-the-art hardware and software.

"There's no doubt that we've grown," says Brady. "But we have maintained the good things about a small business. We can still come in and joke with each other. And the job truly is 24/7. When power lines go down and it taxes the grid at PECO, they have Danella coming in at 2 a.m. My engineering crew will get called to do field surveying and scouting long before any construction or installation can occur. It's a career—not just a job—for a lot of these guys. Because when you need them, they're here." **DC**



Dan Derenski, F. Daniel, hired 1991



DRSI office staff:
Left to right: Ted Hawkins, Tom Walsh, Sandi Clinton, Paul Barents, Nancy Fryer, Tari Malatesta, Rory McGeehan, Dawn Cloherty, Tracey Danella, Pat Danakue

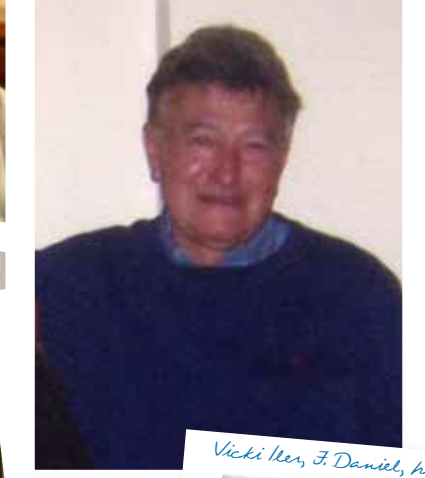
Dave Wesette, F. Daniel, hired 2001



Pete Marano, DLSI, hired 1983



Bill Schmitt, DCC-TM, hired 1984



Danella Rental Systems, Colorado office 2009



Michelle Straney, DCC-FL, hired 1986



Melinda Young, F. Daniel, hired 1989



Deane Lambert, DRSHQ, hired 1989

Rae DeAntonia, DCC-TM, hired 1992



Vicki Iler, F. Daniel, hired 1994



DCC-TM personnel:
Left to right: Mark Pascale, Nick Tenaglia, Wendy Mancini, Rich Neas, Jay Kudlesky, Steve Sarmiento, Carmen Danella

Dave Pascazio, Danella, Sales, hired 1993



Matt Sarmiento, DLSI, hired 2004



F. Daniel office, Loveland, Ohio, 2009



A Taste of Danella— Stories from the Trenches

Just about everyone at Danella Companies has a favorite memory, story, or “character,” but two tales are downright legendary. There is that first Saturday in 1972 when Price Jackson sat down with Jim Danella and told his new twenty-three-year-old boss in no uncertain terms, “*You are going to need some help.*” And there is the time that Joe Hemple was caught in a shootout in Camden, New Jersey—on day two of his career with Danella.

Less universally familiar are the *Italian Hour Radio Show* in the “Booma Truck” and “lunch” in the old days. And how many recall “Meat” and “Fatso,” the day a secretary uncharacteristically swore out loud, and the time a future division manager plopped down on a restaurant floor?

Here are their stories and more . . .

A MULTIPURPOSE NAPKIN Jim Danella and Price Jackson—the college grad and the seasoned foreman—had only been working together for a short time when they put their heads together to write up their bid for a much-needed job in Kulpville, Pennsylvania. “I’m not an estimator, and Jim wasn’t an estimator,” recalls Jackson. “We looked at each other, sat down in a restaurant, and we figured it out on a napkin—with marginal overhead and zero profit—just to win the bid.” And? “We won the job! Everyone laughed at us, but we made money. And as time went on, we made sure to bring in an estimator.”

“We figured it out on a napkin.”

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF A CONTRACT

Jim Danella was just twenty-four years old, with one year of running a business to his credit, and he was already angry. Supremely unhappy with a provision in a particular Bell Telephone contract, he (according to his own recollection) “was ready for war.”

Young Jim strode into the office of Bell Telephone executive John Walti, plunked the contract on the table, and started talking, “In the contract, it states . . .,” and he quoted. “In the contract, it says . . .,” and he quoted some more before concluding with, “It’s in the contract!”

Walti had not interrupted the tirade. And then he just looked at him, without saying a word. When Jim Danella finally reached out to retrieve the contract, Walti put his hand over the document.

“Are you sure you want to read that contract?” he asked. “Are you sure you want to quote that contract? Are you sure you want to go further? Because if you do, I’ll take that contract, and I’ll wrap it around your head.”

With that, John Walti proceeded to deliver to a very startled Jim Danella a detailed lesson on what it means when people refer to “the spirit of the

contract,” and why young Mr. Danella was ill-advised to “go reading paragraph after paragraph when people are really talking about the spirit of the contract.”

“It was a lesson I carried with me for a long time,” Jim says today. “That’s the way business was done in those days. John always tried to keep me on the right course, and he was one of the first people in the utility business who really took an interest in me as a young person.” When Walti retired from Bell, he came to work for Danella, at Danella Line Services and then at Danella Construction Corporation of Colorado, Inc. before he passed away. The Walti Conference Room in Danella headquarters is named in his honor.

TAKING OUR TRUCKS BACK In the early 1990s, Danella experienced an international incident that took some quick thinking to resolve. Tim Schilling picks up it up from there:

We had an AT&T contact who requested trucks in Mexico City, Mexico, and Paul [Barents] quickly dispatched twelve new vehicles, including a tandem dump, to Laredo, Texas. AT&T had drivers ready to pick them up at that point and drive them on to Mexico City.

But unfortunately they only made it about twenty miles into Mexico when all the trucks were stopped and impounded by the Mexican police. Paul was immediately notified and tried to get our trucks back via the proper channels—a futile process that went on for about three weeks. Paul, who never worries, was becoming concerned and exasperated. At one point during this time, I was at the Kansas City airport and I called Paul from a pay phone and asked him, “Do you want me to go there and try to get them back?”

“Yes!” Paul replied quickly.

I found a flight to Laredo and spent that night in a hotel on the border. The following day, armed with the address Paul had provided, I walked across the border to Mexico, hailed a taxi, and went to the address, but it was just a drugstore—needless to say, no Danella trucks to be found. But after a few minutes of speaking with the clerk, I discovered the shop owner had a lot that he rented to the police. I took a taxi there and, yep, our trucks were lined up nice and neat.

The cab driver and I hot-footed it back to the border. I paid him to wait and walked back to the good old USA, found a bank, and took a five-thousand dollar cash advance on my credit card and put a big roll of one-dollar bills in one pocket, a roll of tens in another pocket, a few Benjamins in my wallet, and

The Mercury, August 1, 2006



Daniel P. Creighton/The Mercury
Mike McGourney, job superintendent, and Tim Sykes, foreman, with Danella Construction, inspect the progress of the water and sewer project on Farmington Avenue in Upper Pottsgrove. Work crews in the region will have it tough today as temperatures are expected to reach 100 degrees, with a heat index near 110.



the remainder in my BVDs. Properly stuffed, I walked back across the border to the taxi.

Returning to the “impound lot,” I found a lone uniformed guard. I told him all the trucks belonged to me and asked what was needed to take them back across the border. He hesitated. I didn’t. I offered him twelve hundred dollars—half then and half when they were in the hotel lot in Texas. I assure you, he didn’t hesitate any longer.

Now I just needed drivers. The cab driver said he could round up twelve guys in no time flat and I offered him the same deal—twelve hundred dollars when all the trucks are safe and sound at my hotel. Within a few hours it was done, with only one hitch—none of the Mexicans were willing to drive the tandem dump. No problem. Yours truly was the chauffeur for that baby!

The guard was happy, the cab driver was happy, and most of all, Paul was happy.

MEATBALL, BIG T, NIPPY, AND THE REST OF THE GANG Work crews in the early days of Danella Construction sported a legacy of nicknames that would rival the very best of Italian-themed movies. That naming tradition began with



Renato Mariani

Jim Danella's uncle, Renato Mariani, better known as Uncle Renato or just plain "Unc." As warehouse shop foreman and truck driver, Uncle Renato added Italianisms or immigrant-speak to nearly every syllable that came out of his mouth: *Alla green is ano gold. . . . Whatta dafutz you do? . . . Shuuda dahell uppaa! . . . Heeddi uppaa, kidd! . . . Hey kidd, go getta dakreel. . . .*

And in the early, early morning hours devoted to putting together supplies and materials for the day's construction crews, Unc

helped develop many a nickname for the young crew members who sometimes referred to themselves as "the Youngbloods." Here are just a few: Michael "Fatso" Zappone, Jesse "Meatball" Serrbocco, Richard "Skinner" Gundel (Gundel refuses to this day to disclose where the name actually came from), Nick "the Don" Tenaglia, Tom "Big T" McKernon, Kenny "Haystacks" Harper, Joe "Reds" Podgorski, and Ron "Nippy" Detwiler.

Over time, "Fatso" and "Meatball" began calling one another simply "Meat." A telephone conversation between Serrbocco and Zappone sounded like the Italian version of Abbot and Costello's famous "Who's on First?" routine, "Hey, Meat, it's Meat."

One day, some of the weightier members of the now-aging Youngbloods came up with a new collective nickname for themselves, "Men of Girth," aka "The MOG Squad."

AN HONORABLE DISCHARGE Jim Danella is known for doing a lot of very nice things for his staff. He has thrown lavish holiday parties at his home and at La Collina, a favorite Italian restaurant in Bala Cynwyd on Philadelphia's celebrated Main Line. He's taken executive staff and their spouses on work retreats known as "boot camps"—and always in wonderful locations. He's even treated many of his staff to a round of golf or a skiing vacation. He's even helped employees in need get top-notch medical care. But the favor he once did Chris Straubel can never be duplicated.

Straubel had been working at Faulkner Construction for only a year before he was drafted into the military in 1971. Jim Danella owned the company when he was waiting for his discharge in 1973. "There's a little story behind that," Straubel begins. "During that time, when they were trying to wind down the Vietnam War, you could get out of the military early if the company you worked for wrote a letter and said they needed you back on your job. I was in Hawaii, so I flew back home, and met Jim Danella for the first time and he wrote me a letter so I could get out a few months early. I really did want to get back home."

Nearly forty years later, Chris Straubel continues to work for Danella Line Services.

FIRST DAY ON THE JOB Michael Zappone worked at Danella for thirty-five years, a man equally devoted to his family at home and his extended family at work. He managed the equipment yard and oversaw supplies for the crews that operated out of the Butler Pike headquarters. Working alongside warehouse foreman Earl Freund, he scheduled the crews and made sure every Danella employee had the tools and safety equipment needed for the job each day.

Deeply nostalgic and always willing to reminisce, Zappone



Bill Gilbert, Schuylkill River project

never forgot his first day at Danella Construction, July 11, 1977. "Orientation began 4:30 a.m. that day in a dark back room filled with old-time construction workers," says Zappone, who started out as the driver of a boom truck, working under foreman Bill Gilbert, driving alongside Renato "Unc" Mariani, and, when not driving, taking care of the yard. What he heard at that early-morning orientation he remembers clearly to this day: *You better make sure you take care of Jim Danella's equipment. Jim likes his trucks kept clean. Don't be late. Fuel up at night. Hang your keys up at night. And, finally: Don't let Jim down.*

"They were a tough group of old guys," he says. "And I couldn't help but notice how they talked about Jim with such reverence, loyalty, trust, admiration, and love. Those are the key ingredients in the recipe of a great man."

GOOD FOR THREE MORE YEARS From the beginning, Danella Companies depended on getting contract renewals from the large utility companies just to stay in business. Cheryl Guffey, who joined the company in 1985 and worked in a variety of payroll, invoicing, and record-keeping positions for the company, never forgot the sheer joy of landing a big contract. "Back in those days, when we won, they broke out the wine, and in the back office, we celebrated." The toasts went something like this, "We won the Bell contract! We're good for three more years!"

LANGUAGE TINGED BLUE Everyone knew Gina Pierce, Jim Danella's secretary, administrative assistant, girl Friday, and overall cheerleader. She had worked for Faulkner, and she stayed with the company when a very young Jim Danella became the owner. Everyone also knew that she was not one to (in her words) "take any nonsense from the men." Petite and softspoken, Pierce nevertheless possessed a tough-as-nails persona that made its appearance whenever she felt that Jim Danella or anyone else needed a little straightening out. One day, the typically unflappable Paul Barents was delivering to Pierce some billing information for Danella Rental Systems. He was, uncharacteristically, harried. "I was running around like a one-armed paper hanger, and I didn't have a clear direction in my mind," Barents confesses. "And Gina just looked up and said to me, 'Paul, you have to get your sh*t together.'"

A conference room is named in honor of Gina Pierce, who retired from Danella in 2001.

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*To Peter Mazzari,
Danella Construction of Nj, Inc.*



I would like to share a Danella Holiday story. My 87-year-old mom has been battling cancer for the last four years. . . . I traveled from my home in Rochester, Nj, to be with my mom and care for her during her recent surgery. To be honest, she was not doing well physically and mentally after surgery. I was able to get her out of the apartment later in her recovery by suggesting we go to her favorite restaurant, Aquario, for dinner. As a regular customer she did not think it necessary to make reservations.

When we arrived at Aquario it was filled with people and we were informed, apologetically, that the restaurant was closed to patrons that night. The Danella New York Company had exclusively reserved Aquario that evening for their employee Holiday celebration. Initially we were disappointed and were about to leave when you and your wonderful wife Patti interceded, befriended Mom and me, and insisted that we join the celebration. You would simply not accept any other alternative. Your graciousness and kindness were overwhelming. You and Patti escorted us to the only vacant table and introduced us to many people. We became part of your extended "family." The food was delicious and the camaraderie warm. Throughout the evening you and Patti checked on us to make sure we were okay. Many others stopped by to chat with us as well.

I firmly believe that glorious evening spent with the Danella New York people at Aquario hastened Mom's recovery. She is back to normal activities, in full song. Both of us cannot stop talking about our wonderful, joyful experience with Peter and Patti Mazzari and the Danella employees at Aquario. Thank you again for your generosity and display of humanity, sharing and compassion.

DANELLA WELLNESS

These photos reflect a small sampling of the wellness initiatives that have become part of Danella's culture. With events such as wellness fairs, guest speakers, exercise classes, and more, Jim Danella emphasizes the importance of a healthy lifestyle. And he leads by example. As a member of "Team Danella," he has participated in several organized bicycle rides from Philly to the Jersey Shore, with plans to expand the Team's rides in the future.



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DON'T EVER ORDER THE PIZZA Dave Aversano starts laughing before he even begins to tell this story. Back in the 1970s, when lunch hour sometimes included a meal and some alcoholic refreshments, a Danella employee named Walt “Bo” Jones was supposed to meet an inspector at a job site. According to Aversano—who rose through the ranks at Danella as a laborer, truck driver, foreman, and then superintendent—Bo decided to stop at a bar across the street for lunch and proceeded to have a beer. Or two. His plan had been to walk back across the street to meet the inspector, but, needless to say, Bo lost track of time. When the inspector showed up, he didn’t see Bo. However, he did see his truck parked at the bar. So he waited another twenty minutes. Finally, Bo came out of the bar, saw the inspector, walked right over to him, and, never skipping a beat, yelled out, “Don’t ever order pizza in that place!”

THE ITALIAN HOUR Michael Zappone, Jesse Serrbocco, and Joseph McGann enjoy recalling Danella stories, the kind that provide a little laughter in a day filled with hard labor and long hours. There’s the “talking” mailbox story, about

the time a crew member, fancying himself an amateur ventriloquist, hid in a ditch and threw his voice to make the postman think the mailbox was talking; the story of sleeping on bags of grass seeds in the yard when you were just too tired to drive home; and the time Serrbacco dozed off on a railroad flat car in Pennsylvania and woke up in New Jersey. But their favorite may be the story of the “Booma Truck—The Italian Hour,” which goes like this:

“Uncle Renato used to make us overload the trucks so we wouldn’t have to make two trips to Delaware with supplies,” says Zappone. “We were riding down Route 202 one day—so overloaded—and *The Italian Hour* was on the radio. The radio was blaring, it was loud in the truck, and we couldn’t hear anything. Finally, I looked in the rearview mirror and, holy crap, there was a cop, with the lights on and everything, right behind us. Uncle Renato was afraid of authority, so as soon as he pulled over, he started talking, ‘Soa officer, what’sa wrong here?’

“And the officer said, ‘You’re overloaded. And why didn’t you stop when I put my lights on?’

“‘Oh, officer, I’m so so sorry. Because we listening to *The Italian Hour*, we couldnotta hear anything.’ And you know what? The cop didn’t give us a ticket!”

THE MAN IN THE JORDACHE JEANS Two stories from Tim Schilling, one before he joined Danella in 1991 and one just after:

In the late 1980s, Schilling worked as a supervisor for New Jersey Bell when Danella won a contract to do the company’s cable work in Atlantic City. Schilling arranged to have lunch with Jim Danella to review the contract. “I looked out at this Lincoln Continental pulling up, and out popped these two guys at the construction site wearing Jordache jeans and shiny work boots and shiny jackets. And to be honest with you, I wasn’t sure what to expect from these guys.”

Schilling, who would leave Bell to join Danella Companies in 1991—later running Danella Rental Systems’ Colorado operations—pauses, and then continues, “But they came in. I started going through the contract, and Jim said, ‘Whatever it is you want, we’ll do it. Let’s go to lunch.’ I liked this guy, but I asked them to dress down quite a bit on the job because I didn’t want them to stand out. And Jim and I developed a long working relationship.”

To Price Jackson,
J. Daniel & Company Inc.:

I am a resident in Hamilton, Ohio. I had the pleasure of Cincinnati Bell installing a new B line at my house the past two weeks. I would like to nominate your workers for a customer first award. These men worked so very hard, hand digging a number of holes in my yard. They arrived every day on time, worked in the 90-degree heat, never complained. They just worked together as we all should. These men, in my eyes, are outstanding. My yard looks great. Can't tell the holes were even as big as they are. Thank you, guys, for a job well done.





Now, the first time Tim Schilling met Joe Hemple, the two found themselves working together in New Jersey on a New Jersey Bell contract. “Joe didn’t know me from Adam,” Schilling recalls, “and we went to a local restaurant. We’re having dinner, and I’m getting to know Joe—making conversation. So I tell him, ‘Did you know that a person is as wide as he is tall. If you put both arms out and measure fingertip to fingertip, that’s how tall you are.’ Well, Joe didn’t believe me. And because of how I am, I just laid down on the carpet, which had a nice checkerboard pattern, and spread out. And then I said, ‘See, there it is.’ Joe has never really recovered from that.”

SEPTEMBER 11—STILL VIVID TODAY Before night fell in New York City on September 11, 2001, Peter A. Mazzari, head of Danella Construction of NY, Inc., was already working to coordinate the company’s emergency utility repair crews to assist the areas around the World Trade Center devastated by the terrorist attacks. “The sights and the smells live with me to this date,” he says. “Building 7 still ablaze, faces of first responders, blankets of ash like you were walking on the moon, ghostly silhouettes of the remaining steel tridents against a darkened sky, demolished emergency vehicles . . . Watching news footage of the tenth anniversary, I remember saying to my wife, Patti, ‘It is immeasurable what degree of hatred there must have been in the souls of those terrorists to orchestrate such an act.’”

HURRICANE SEASON—FAMILIES COME FIRST In 2004, Danella Construction Corp. of FL, Inc. faced one of the deadliest, costliest Atlantic hurricane seasons ever: four named hurricanes and one named tropical storm made landfall on the state. At one point, Joe Hemple, president of the Danella Florida division, shut down operations in his Melbourne home office and took his core team to Home Depot to buy over seven hundred dollars’ worth of plywood, which he donated to his employees so that they could cover windows and doors and make sure their families were safe.

It was, quite simply, the right thing to do. But Dan Howick, engineering manager for Danella in Florida, also saw it as a sage management decision. “It may have cost us seven hundred dollars, but it created far more value in loyalty from our employees. Mr. Hemple is a very smart man. He knew that if the hurricanes were coming, his employees would work better if they knew their families were safe. We were setting telephone poles an hour after one of those

To Rich Neas,
Danella construction of PA:

You probably often get complaints rather than praise so i wanted to reach out quickly and talk to you about your crew on Barren Hill Road. The guys that have been working on this project are courteous, respectful and kind. i have three-year-old twins that know most of the crew by name because they enjoy saying “Hi” and watching them . . . and the diggers!

From Tom the foreman, to Terry the operator, Eric the tradesman and Galai the flagger, they have gone out of their way to make sure that they respect our property, the innocence and curiosity of two little girls and my wife, who’s home with them all day. Even the drivers for the tri-axles are great to my girls, giving them a little beep or wave when they are coming by. we might be a little different because we enjoy having the road closed, but there hasn’t been any instance where i have had remorse as a father or a homeowner that your guys have spent the spring in front of our house.



storms, coming home to weeks of no air conditioning and no power.”

“We went to work on Labor Day weekend, and we came home at Christmas,” recalls Mike Straney, operations manager for Danella in Melbourne. “The storms, at the time, seemed like hell. We talk about the work afterward, but the worst part is riding them out. We can’t move until they pass, when the roads are safe again. But you sit at home, and you know what is coming.”

Added Tom Schinske, general manager for Danella in Florida, “When Hurricane Fay came through in 2008, we had flooding like you would not believe. And during flooding time, fire ants gather together and float on top of the water, trying to find anything that is dry. They are like floating mounds of fire ants, and they get all over you.” **DC**

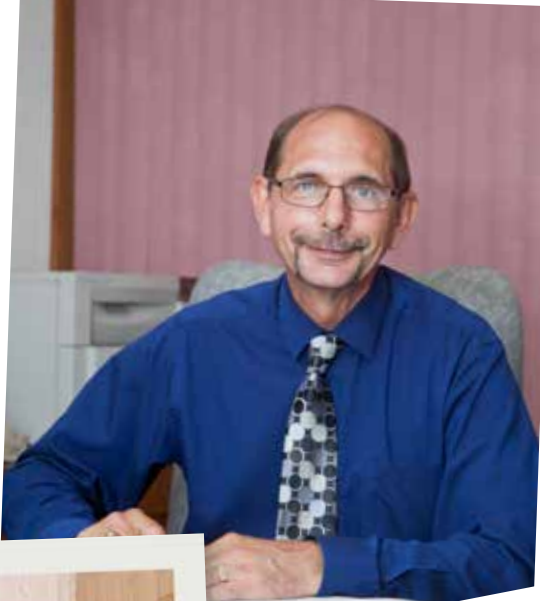
Sabrina Wagener, DCC-FL, hired 2007



Charlie Schmidt, Danella HQ, hired 2006



Tom Schincke, DCC-FL, hired 1987



Cheryl Gullett, Danella HQ, hired 1985 and Margie Brown, Danella HQ, hired 1998.



Jane Behil, DRSF-CO, hired 2007



Dave Engleman, DRSF-CO, hired 2008



Mike Straney, DCC-FL, hired 1987



Mike Matoyzo, Danella Atlantic, hired 1984



Tim Kukada, DCC-PM, hired 2009



Dan Hawick, DCC-FL, hired 2003

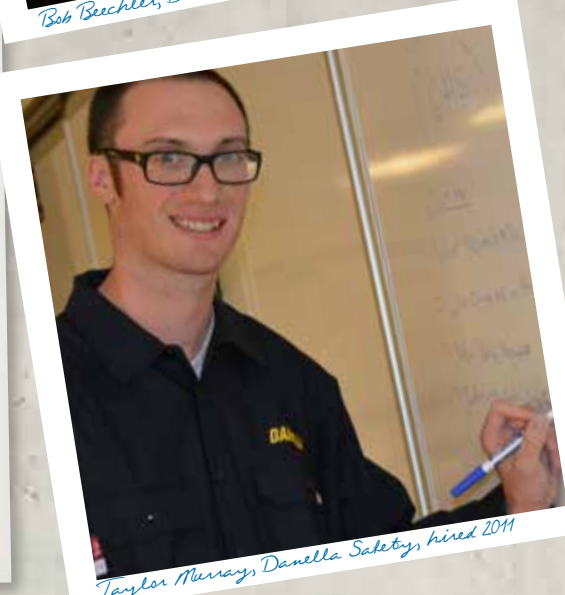


Bob Beecher, DCC-PM, hired 2010



Al Van Houston, DCC-PM, hired 1980

Carmen Danella, DCC-PM, hired 2003



Taylor Murray, Danella Safety, hired 2011



DCC-FL: Left to right: Leonel Matos (hired 2006), Mike Straney and Scott Barnhardt (hired 1999)



Rose Mapp, Danella HQ, hired 2011

The Future— Bringing More to the Table

Jim Danella does some of his best thinking at three o'clock in the morning, when sleep doesn't always come easily and the quiet hour gives him the freedom to dwell wherever his mind settles. As he thinks about the company he started in 1972, he readily admits that he spends a lot of sleepless hours pondering the future of Danella Companies, Inc. When he explores just what "the future" means for him and for his fifteen hundred-plus employees, one particular client's remark resonates more than any other, "We can get anyone to dig a ditch. We need the contractor who is going to bring more to the table."

For his entire career, Jim Danella has been driven to be that contractor: the one who "brings more," who anticipates problems, facilitates solutions, and brings to a project experience and expertise so complete that there is no doubt that the client will be eager to work with him and his company again and again. While there's no question that Danella's national company is a success, the true measure of the firm's collective quest to be the contractor who brings it all to the table is apparent when you talk to Jim Danella about that future he sees at three in the morning.

"I'm not finished," he tells you. "I still have different visions for Danella, and I know that we still have a lot of work ahead of us. I want to make sure that we take advantage of every single opportunity we can, that we hire the best people we can, and that we expand Danella Companies in areas that we may not yet have even considered. The time

"I want it all. I never give up on anything."



to look for work is when you *don't* need it, because when you need it, it's too late."

Whether the talk takes place in Danella's shiny corporate headquarters or in the muck of construction trenches, the topic of conversation, as often as not, is the future. How will the rapidly and continually changing technology of digital communications impact Danella? What problems will the slow and uncertain economic recovery mean for the utility construction business? Will Danella continue to grow and expand? What new areas of work will Danella pursue? And just how exciting will they be?

"Construction is probably 85 percent of our business, and it is our goal to grow it. There is definitely growth opportunity out there for us, in all of our areas of expertise—gas, electric, water, communications," says John Bass, vice president, construction. "Over the last several years, while the economy has been very difficult, we have *grown* our customer base. As the economy improves, we are setting ourselves up for more growth as our customers start spending money for construction."

Bass admits that the need for POTS—Plain Old Telephone Service—has decreased dramatically over the last decade as more and more customers cut back on landline services. "No one is investing in it," says Bass. "But, fortunately, the amount of data that still has to get from place to place has resulted in a lot of other work for us, mainly in fiber. Granted, AT&T's mission is to make everything mobile. They want *everything* distributed over the airways. But an important thing to remember is that everything that goes over the airways is connected back to a central plant. The more stuff that they hang on cell towers, the bigger the wire they need back to central. It's our job to understand that and to plan for that."

Still, Jim Danella sees a future with inevitably fewer hard telecom wires. Accordingly, he wants to steer company expansion toward gas, electric, and water utility construction work—"not by dropping back and doing less in communications," he explains, "but by doing more of the others."

Jim Danella is not one to overlook an opportunity or back away from a challenge. As winter storms and hurricanes threaten and sometimes ravage the infrastructure of our cities and towns, Danella saw an opportunity to expand his business by helping to restore services to these areas. Hence, the

start of Danella's Emergency Response Team, part of Danella Construction Corporation of PA. Headed by Rich Neas and Frank Renner, they are assisted by Margie Brown and Taylor Murray. Brown, who has essentially taken on the role of project manager, assists Frank Renner in coordinating all of the logistics involved with moving personnel and equipment on such short notice. Brown's twenty-plus years of experience at Danella make her invaluable to the success of this new opportunity.

In engineering, Jim Danella is optimistic that the country's growing dependence on online networking and communications—for everything from job interviews and college courses to employee training and movie downloads—will no doubt continue to create new work opportunities for the company's new Integrated Solutions business.

Dave Aversano, who has worked for the company since 1973, can't help but see the past as an indicator of the company's future. "The loyalty that the company has had with the customers—it really says something that after forty years, we haven't lost the customers that we started with, that they still have faith in us." He reflects a moment. "Why do customers invite us back? Because we do a good job."

As he looks back on four decades of his company's success, Jim Danella has no illusions about the increasingly difficult and competitive bidding processes he and his employees face, or the inevitable reality of that competition: shrinking profit margins. But he simply continues to believe in his ability and that of his people to reinvent and reconfigure the company's path, to always satisfy the customer, to grow internally, to take advantage of every opportunity, and to always—*always*—be the contractor who does more than just dig ditches.

"I want it all," says James D. Danella, a confident smile at last settling on his face. "I never give up on anything." **DC**



Peter and Patti Mazzari, and Mary Jo and Jim Danella, Christmas, 2008



Dennis Daly and Jim Danella, 2003



Commemorating 25 Years in Business, 1997



John Carlagno, Dennis Daly, and Jim Danella at Stan Steinberg's retirement party, 1993



Mary and Dennis Daly, 2009



Chris Kane, Jack Gorman, Paul Barents, and Bob Fletcher, 1987

Jim Danella and Gina Pierce, costume party, 1988



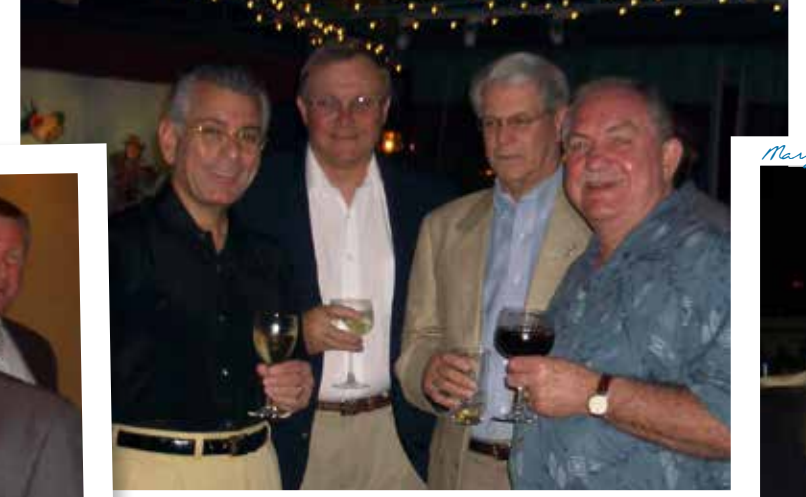
Joe Hemple and Tim Schilling, 1987



Bill Skille's retirement party, 2006



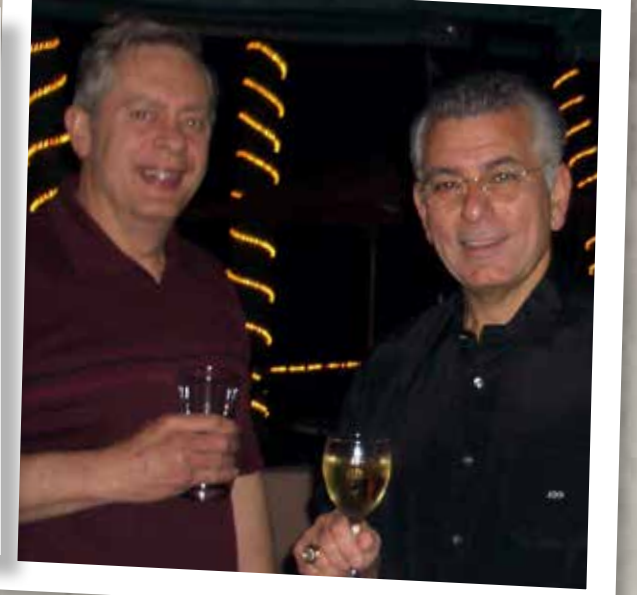
Jim Danella, Dave Seiler, Joe Hemple and Price Jackson, Boat Camp, 2003



Mary Jo and Jim Danella, 2009



Dave Engleman and Jim Danella, 2003



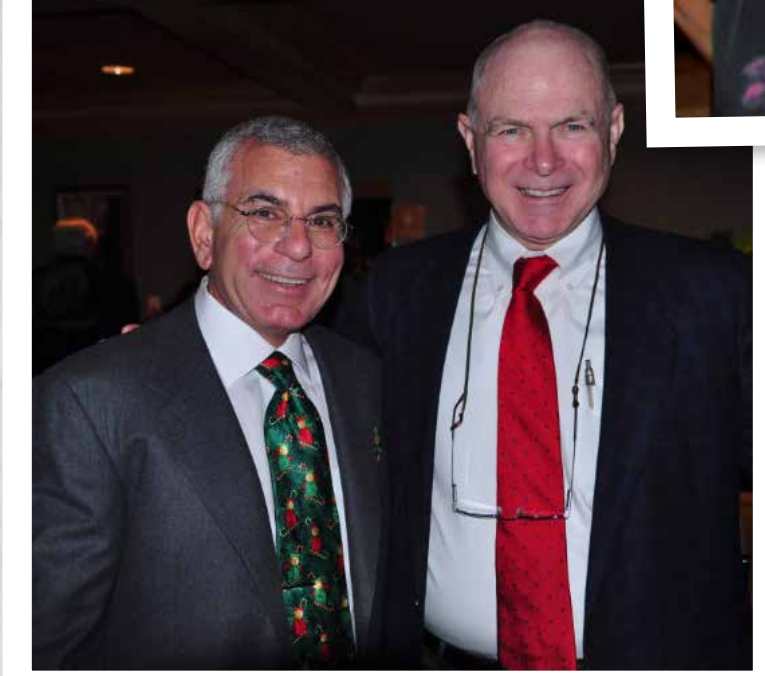
Price Jackson and Gina Pierce, 10th Anniversary celebration, 1982



Bob Burt and Cheryl Gully, 1987



Bob Lockhall and Frank Beck, 1987



Dennis Daly and Jim Danella, 2008



Cheryl Gully, Stan Steinberg and Joe Linnacchi at Steinberg's retirement party, 1993



Al Luciatto and Charlie Burt, 1987

As Jim Danella explores the company's future,
one client's comment echoes in the darkness
around him, a client statement that Danella
can't get out of his head, "We can get anyone
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I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge every employee of all the Danella divisions throughout the years. Each and every one of you have been invaluable to the growth and success of Danella Companies, Inc. It is with sincere appreciation that I say,

“Thank you.”

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "James A. Danella". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the text "Thank you."