

WOODS

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and 20 acres at Fairmont Avenue and Interstate 255 where it houses fleet and inventory. Woods has become the highest-rated and most-reviewed contractor in its industry, he said.

Rick and Anna Lee Woods are semiretired and living in a tree-lined property in Greenville in Bond County. The day-to-day operations are now being handled by the general manager, son Wayne Woods, who began working with his father at age 16.

Susan Warchol, their daughter, is the office manager, and Tim Warchol leads the commercial division.

The Woods have nine grandchildren, almost all of whom have been subjected to the Woods’ Way at some point in their lives. The oldest grandson is now in the U.S. Navy. The second grandson and oldest granddaughter attend college, and the rest are in high school and younger.

One of the longest-tenured employees is Chris Blickenstaff, the commercial production manager and a cousin to Wayne and Susan. He has been there 27 years.

“As we’ve been growing these last several years, the right people are coming along at the right time,” Thompson said. “We’ve taken care of the growth we’ve been experiencing while maintaining a high level of customer service.”

Woods advertising likes to say the company takes care of “all things ‘basementy’.”

“If the basement’s ugly, we’ll make it beautiful. If the basement’s wet, we’ll make it dry. If it’s cracked, we’ll make it strong,” Thompson said. Services include, among others, basement waterproofing, foundation repair, crawl space

encapsulation and concrete leveling. Technology has vastly helped the business since the Woods family started. Their chief manufacturer offers solutions for retrofitting foundations and a clog free, no filter needed, waterproofing system.

Some basement work is simply cosmetic, whether it’s a small, medium or large residential project, or a commercial one. The cost varies by job.

“Anybody that works with concrete knows it’s going to get really, really hard, and it’s going to crack,” Thompson said. “And just because it cracks doesn’t mean there’s a problem. But if it leaks, that needs to be solved. Sometimes there is a structural problem, a shifting that needs to be restored to its structural integrity so that the walls are doing what they are supposed to be doing, which is holding up the rest of your house.”

Most waterproofing is done from the inside, but on the structural side, the solution varies with the problem and some issues must be done from the exterior.

“If you get hold of a problem soon enough, a lot of it can be done on the inside. But unfortunately, when it comes to foundation repair, some people ignore it until it’s too late.”

The company has always done free estimates, he said.

If there is a reason it polled strongly in the annual IBJ reader vote, it is partly because of the “tens of thousands of homeowners we have helped,” he said.

Thompson said there is a “camaraderie” at Woods that spells the nature of the business. For him, it became clear years ago when employees banded together to donate their vacation days to two fellow workers who were facing family medical crises at the same time.

It was the right thing happening at the

right time for the right reasons. And it reflects what is going on each day.

“The family vibe is the real thing,” Thompson said.

Service is real, too. As example of the respect that the business commands, Woods Basement Systems has earned the Better Business Bureau Torch Award for marketplace ethics six times since 2005.

“As Rick said, it is nice that there is an industry watchdog that also points out the good guys.”

Thompson concluded by repeating what

he said Wayne Woods wants everyone to know.

“Over the years there a lots of reasons for our success and growth but none greater than the fact that so many good people choose to get up each day and come to here to help our company help homeowners solve their problems. This is a humbling reality. We are grateful for being recognized as a Best Workplace because we know that the best people work here.”

Archford, Ameren win in Best Places to Work

Swansea-based Archford Capitol Strategies took great pride in learning that it had finished as one of the top three Best Places to Work in Southwestern Illinois for 2020.

“In my opinion, Archford truly is the best place to work. It is a privilege and honor to work with the ‘Archford Army!’” Chief Executive Officer and Founder Jim Maher said in a statement.

Archford was runner-up to top winner Woods Basement Systems in Collinsville.

Ameren Illinois took third place. The vote was conducted at the paper’s website, ibjonline.com, and the result will continue to be posted there throughout the year.

In a statement, Maher summed up his pride in his company.

“Imagine if you can, waking up excited to get to a place to engage with like-minded individuals with one goal in mind – Helping Others! This goal is

centered around three areas: our clients, colleagues and community.

“Imagine working with creative, cutting edge professionals that enjoy the companionship of ‘A’ players. It is so fun to watch the chemistry of true problem solvers as they work daily to make others’ lives better.

“Archford is honored to have been nominated as a Best Places to Work finalist and we are excited to have received runner up. Congratulations to Woods Basement Systems on 1st place!”

He signed it, “Congrats, Team”, then added a postscript:

“PS: BTW, this is not just my opinion. Their work is backed by a variety of industry awards, including Financial Advisor Magazine’s 2020 RIA Ranking, Top DC Advisor Team List, St. Louis Small Business Monthly’s Top Winning Work Place & Future 50 Companies, Wealth Management.com’s CEO of the Year Finalist and more.”





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- Played a key role in professional expedited licensure directly impacting 110 professions for military and their spouses
- Presented to over 30,000+ individuals in the region promoting STEM workforce and technical careers through the Building Workforce²⁰³⁰ program

Promoting Southwestern Illinois

- Completed a regional marketing communications campaign to key internal and external economic development decision makers with regional partners
- SITE Selection Magazine, a high profile magazine, EVP, Conway Inc./ Site Selection Magazine, Ron Starner visited and toured the Southwestern IL region
- Consul of Economic Affairs for Consulate General of Japan in Chicago, Keidanren USA, and JETRO Chicago visited and toured the Southwestern IL region



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