

Filling a need for homes, homeowners

Lakeside Insulation has been growing its services since 1956

BY JOAN TUPPONCE
Special correspondent

Ed Preston grew up in the home insulation business.

"I started insulating at the age of 7," said Preston, co-owner of Hanover County-based Lakeside Insulation, which sells and installs insulation, vinyl siding, vinyl replacement windows, and builds decks and additions.

"That is how I spent my summer vacation every year."

His father started Lakeside Insulation in 1956. But Preston and his wife, Marsha, bought the company from his father, John R. Preston Jr., in 1989.

The business grew in the early years as the need for insulation increased.

"Houses were not required to have insulation until around 1980," Preston said. "(Since then) the minimum requirements have raised the amount of insulation required."

Before the recession began, the business was evenly split between new construction and retrofitting existing homes.

"Now it's about 90 percent existing homes because people aren't building," Preston said. "Sixty percent of our jobs are for insulation; 40 percent are siding and windows. In years when there is a substantial tax credit, the demand for windows and insulation goes up."

Replacement windows tied in with energy savings have been a growing part of the company's business, he said. "It took a couple of years for word to get out (about the windows) and for the momentum to pick up. We added vinyl siding a couple of years after the windows."

Adding building services and installing vinyl replacement windows have been a boost to



Ed Preston and his wife, Marsha, own Lakeside Insulation in Mechanicsville. The company, started by Ed's father in 1956, specializes in vinyl siding and vinyl replacement windows.

ALEXA WELCH EDLUND/TIMES-DISPATCH

sales to the company.

"We've grown about 50 percent over the last 15 years," said Preston, a 1977 graduate of University of Richmond.

Steve Flora had Lakeside Insulation replace the siding on his home in Hanover and add new windows. He also had the company insulate underneath his home.

"They are wonderful people to work with," he said, adding that the customer service is excellent. "We had a window that got broken out and it was replaced as quickly as possible."

The company targets customers in the Richmond metro area, primarily people who want to add or upgrade their insulation, Preston said.

Most of Lakeside's new customers are referred to the com-

Lakeside Insulation

What is it?: Residential insulation, vinyl siding and vinyl replacement windows

Employees: Seven, including owners

Owners: Ed and Marsha Preston

Location: 7046 Dodsworth Lane in Mechanicsville

Contact: (804) 746-4544 or www.lakesideinsulation.com

pany. "Referrals are one of the most valuable assets we have," he said.

Wayne Williams of Richmond has referred several customers to Lakeside Insulation.

"They are real honest people," he said about Lakeside Insulation owners and employees. "They don't try to sell you something you don't need. If you think you need something and you don't, Ed will tell you.

He is not going to let you waste your money."

Tom Hauck Sr. of Hanover describes Lakeside Insulation's work as "top notch."

"They do good workmanship," he said. "They go out of their way to help you and their prices are fair."

Many of the company's employees have been with Lakeside Insulation for more than two decades.

"The average employment is about 25 years," Preston said, adding that several employees have worked for the company for more than 30 years.

Marsha Preston started working in the office when she was in high school.

"She has always been part of the business," Preston said. "She runs the office. She is in charge of everything from payroll to Facebook."

At the moment, the company has no plans to expand services.

"The economy has forced us to be a little more short sighted," Preston said. "We are holding on and waiting for the cycle to run its course. We are servicing the accounts we have and making sure we are available for people when they have siding and insulation needs."