

PENN VALLEY CONSTRUCTORS, LLC

“Partners in Excellence”

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Tavo Packaging—A Family’s Journey

By Jon Otto



Hal Taylor was born and grew up in Indiana where he earned a marketing degree from the University of Indiana and met and married his wife of 57 years, Judith. After a

Hal wondered how he would ever fill it, but fill it he did and by the early 90’s he was again in need of more space. In 1996 that problem was solved, a customer of Tavo’s, Mead Packaging, was doing some corporate restructuring and was moving out of their 175,000 square foot building at 2 Canal Road in Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania. They offered it to Tavo.

Tavo’s Langhorne location



tour with the United States Army where he served in Germany, in 1968 Hal and Judith moved to Doylestown, Pennsylvania and started a family.

Ten years later, Hal started Tavo Packaging, a business focused on high quality custom folding cartons.

As Tavo’s business grew, its commitment to quality and customer service created long term relationships with some of the world’s most recognized brands. Tavo soon needed more space and Hal found a building in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

It was much larger than their needs and felt like an empty amphitheater.

This would be another huge step, but Hal, who had been joined in the business by sons, Jeff and Dave, took the leap. Mead, knowing the quality of Tavo’s product and service, gave Tavo a very favorable price and more importantly, a lot of business to help Tavo absorb the extra expense. The boost of Mead’s business, coupled with the expanded buying power, enabled by a large rail served warehouse helped Tavo to continue its growth.

Mead Packaging building pre-Tavo





Now fast forward to 2018, Tavo had added high speed printing machines and maintained its commitment to quality and customer service. The result was more growth. So once again Tavo found itself out of space. Across the street from Tavo at 1 Canal Road, Penn Valley Constructors had just completed a new facility for AM Gatti (see Newsletter XXIX). Jeff and Dave had watched the process and liked what they saw. They had called us a few times to discuss what we were doing at Gatti and to talk about the process. In late 2018, we were invited to Tavo for our first face to face meeting with them. Our first meeting was with Dave Taylor and staff, Jeff soon joined us at the many subsequent meetings.

At these meetings, we learned that Tavo was faced with many challenges and many opportunities. To fulfill their customers' needs, Tavo was purchasing and installing a new Large Format Press. This addition would necessitate relocating their Baler Room, where Tavo consolidated scrap for recycling, and "steal" a portion of their already inadequate warehouse space. So,

there were two immediate needs; first, the relocation of the Baler Room to make way for the new press and second, the expansion of the warehouse by as much as the township would allow. This ultimately shook out to be 77,000 square feet.

Jeff and Dave wanted us to limit the interior columns and increase the clear height to 33 feet to accommodate more vertical storage. This addition and the expansion of the second shift would also create the need for additional parking and storm water management, some of which would need to be underground beneath the new parking areas.

There was a lot to learn and a lot to discuss, but ultimately, we were retained in late 2019 to initiate the design. We all know what happened after that; Covid. This was a game changer; we all had to learn to have remote meetings, time was lost to illness and township meetings were delayed. A process that with the inclusion of zoning relief, would normally take 6-8 months, took



well over a year. Fortunately, we enjoy a good relationship with Falls Township and with their help, in March of 2021, a year after the beginning of Covid, we were able to start work on the Baler Room relocation.





The Baler Room relocation was not a large job, but it was complicated as it included dust collection, classified electrical installations and a high-density fire suppression system. Additionally, this 110' x 65' room was built right in the middle of Tavo's production area adjacent to its active dust sensitive presses and its shipping and receiving docks. Work went fairly smoothly, but we did start to feel the beginnings of the supply chain crunch (which at this writing is still not totally behind us). Components of overhead doors and various electrical and mechanical components became scarce and subject to increased cost. Despite these challenges we were able to substantially complete our work by the end of June. With the completion of the Baler Room, in late June of 2021 turned our attention to the very extensive sitework requirements and ultimately the

warehouse. We had to start with drainage work and the construction of new employee parking lots to replace parking areas displaced by the addition of new loading docks in the existing building. Once the soil erosion requirements, drainage and parking areas were completed, in August we were able to start footings and proceed with the construction of the warehouse.

By the second quarter of 2021, supply chain difficulties started to have a more severe impact on the construction industry. Steel and

lumber prices started to shoot up and deliveries started to push out to 6 then 8 then ultimately over 12 months. We were watching this very carefully and knew we had to do





something very drastic to protect our customer from price increases and delays. Lumber was only incidental to this project. Steel, however, was the heart of the warehouse construction. We talked to our vendor in late March and negotiated a deal with them; we would have to order the building in the beginning of April, before the plans were complete and in turn, they would commit to delivering the steel by the first of October without any price increases. There was a catch, we had to order the building “for production” without approval drawings which are standard pro forma. Fortunately Jeff and Dave agreed to this radical action and authorized us to order the steel before we were finished the design and able to provide the final price.

The only downside of this was that when the steel arrived, we were not ready for it. We had to “put it on the ground” and wait until the foundations were completed and we could start erection. Six weeks was a minor inconvenience for a big win; steel prices increased more than 30% from March to September of 2021 and deliveries did in fact push out to 12 months and more.

Tavo saved \$300,000 AND we had the material when we needed it. From the time we started the erection of the steel building to the completion of the project everything progressed as planned. The winter of 2021-2022 was relatively gentle and we were able to essentially complete the building construction in March of 2022 and clean up the sitework for paving in April and May.

On December 3rd of 2022 the three generations of Tavo management, Hal, sons Dave and Jeff and grandson, Stuart welcomed customers and friends to its newly expanded facility to show off its new Koenig & Bauer



Rapida 145 large format press and its expanded warehouse space. Not the end of the journey, but a huge milestone.

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