

Local Construction Company Has Vertical Niche/Home Grown Roots

By **NANCY VICKERS-PYLE**

Highlands County is known to have some of the best construction companies in the Heartland.

Who hasn't heard of Homes by Handley, the various Mark Gose construction enterprises and the home-building prowess of Sedlock and Heston Construction.

Even in a slow market, there seems to be a remarkable balance of construction talent, all of it home grown.

Add to that now, D&D Construction, founded in 1985 by Daryl Williams, and adding the second "D," Darand Williams after he graduated from Sebring High School in 1989.

Darand Williams describes his and his father's construction niche as "vertical."

Locally, that would include the Residence Inn by Marriott on U.S. 27 on Little Lake Jackson. It was built in less than a year and is a four-story, 55,000 square foot hotel.

D&D also finished a 37,000 square foot expansion of the Four Points by Sheraton Sebring, Chateau Elan, next to Sebring International Raceway, in record time and under budget.

Reinhard Haubner, general manager of the 123 rooms and suites, verified that and added that D&D did a great job, all around.

Darand Williams believes that the success of the expansion would not have been possible without the City of Sebring Building Department, and people like Mike Willingham of the Sebring Airport Authority.

"The owner, the architects, every-

one worked together to make this happen. Every question had an answer," Williams said.

"Highlands County is home," Williams said.

He said Tres Stephenson, CEO of Sebring International, "taught me to wrestle."

His friends include the Yarbrough's, the Smoaks; and his kindergarten teacher was Miss Gose, like most kids in Sebring of that era.

Because Darand Williams knows his home and has done construction and lived in lots of Central Florida, as well as in Georgia and Alabama, his outlook on the Heartland economy is enlightening and uplifting.

"We look forward to doing more in Highlands County. Even with the economy bump, Highlands County has one of the best opportunities to recover. We have a lot going for us here," he said.

Speaking of the D&D vertical niche, the construction company spent 15 of its years in business with headquarters on the Disney World property completing some 1,000 construction contracts.

D&D is building a Marriott Fairfield Inn and Suites in Plant City, another one in St. Augustine and yet another in Augusta, Ga.

Back home, D&D is the general contractor for the Majestic Cove Luxury Condominium project on Lakeview Drive on Lake Jackson.



ABOVE: Darand Williams is third from the left in this group of Sebring leaders at a groundbreaking ceremony for Majestic on Lake Jackson in November of last year. Williams and his father Daryl, own D&D Construction and are the general contractors for the condominium project.

*RIGHT: Darand Williams
PHOTOS BY MARY MEERMAN-ALANIZ*



The project broke ground in November of last year and is expected to be finished in late 2009.

Darand Williams said the company uses a combination of both local and outside subcontractors.

"We use Bowen Roofing, Mike Knott, Woody's, West Coast. We use local trades whenever we can. We use a majority of locals," he said.

The Williams are third generation

Highlands County and builders.

Darand's grandfather, Otis Williams, built some of the first cloverleaf highways in Los Angeles and the original Skyway Bridge in St. Pete.

If you want to more about the Williams and D&D Construction, see www.ddconstructionservices.com or call 407-654-7545.