

maker and he enjoyed watching his uncles build homes.

"Building is in my blood because I grew up in that environment ... and it came fairly natural to me," he said.

After graduating from Trenton High School in 1977, DenOuden went to Sir Sandford Fleming in Peterborough and earned his diploma in construction engineering.

He worked for local engineering firms and spent some time as plant manager for a structural steel manufacturer in Belleville.

He married his high school sweetheart, Toni, in 1980, and they have raised seven children.

In 1985, he started Hilden Homes Ltd. with a business partner; four years later, he became the sole owner.

His firm has built single-family homes, multi-unit residential units, as well as, smaller commercial projects. He has completed land development projects for such popular subdivisions as Crestview Heights in Hillcrest, Stonebridge Court in the city's west end and Denver Court in Trenton.

"It's been challenging due to the fluctuations in the economy and with government bureaucracy as it pertains to building rules and regulations. But we have been successful and I love what I do ... I have been blessed with a wonderful staff."

DenOuden said his business philosophy is simple.

"I treat people, whether clients, staff or subtrades, with honesty and integrity. So at the end of the day, you feel good about it and you are proud of the product we pro-

duce," he said.

DenOuden is getting lots of satisfaction serving on the board of directors of the children's safety village, joining other volunteers from the Belleville Police Service, home builders' association, the local health unit and area school boards.

"It's exciting to have it completed over the next few months. It's also exciting how the community has shown its support by helping out."

The project is designed to teach safety to kids. The miniature village will have roads, curbs, sidewalks, railway crossings, traffic signals and classrooms.

What is especially gratifying for DenOuden is that the project value could top \$1.3 million if not for the generous donations and gifts-in-kind from home builders and the community.

"We have raised just over \$300,000 from the community-at-large, and with a little more funding, we will have sufficient funds to complete the project," he said proudly.

DenOuden is also involved in another important community building project — construction of the new Quinte Christian High School on 25 acres of land on Wallbridge-Loyalist Road.

He took over last summer as chairman of the steering committee and he anticipates construction to begin this spring for completion by early 2006.

"I am excited to be involved because I have a strong commitment to the values of a Christian education and I bring with me the experience of a similar project for Trenton Christian School five years ago."

DenOuden said the Christian school community has already raised \$3 million toward the cost and the remainder will come from gifts in kind (donated material and labour).

"It's a project that will rely on community support because there is no government funding," he said.

DenOuden sponsors various sports events and teams.

"We make the money in the community and I believe we should invest some back in the community."

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