



Business

VIEW FROM THE TOP: Water towers all over N.C. sport her colors

by **By Dale Neal**, DNEAL@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM
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Name: Wendy Banks Age: 38

Position: Co-owner, Carolina Management Team

Job responsibilities: Carolina Management Team is a woman-owned industrial painting company that primarily serves North Carolina municipalities by repairing and painting water and wastewater treatment plants. (My husband likes to say that I paint the sewers.)

We have worked across the state from Raleigh to Robbinsville to improve the infrastructure of our state's aging water and wastewater plants. I started and run the company with my youngest brother, David Van Zee, and our dad, George Van Zee, when he is not traveling in his recreational vehicle. We started the company with two projects: painting the silos at Silver-Line plastics here in Asheville and painting the Manson Meads Complex for the city of Winston-Salem, which houses the water department's administrative staff. The city of Winston-Salem has been our biggest client ever since. We are currently working with the city of Asheville, the town of Sanford and the city of Raleigh on various pipe galleries, clarifiers and tanks.

I handle everything except the painting.

Number of employees at your business: Nine and growing.

Lives in: Biltmore Lake. Originally from: Boca Raton, Fla.

How you ended up in WNC: My brother David wanted to start a painting company in WNC, where we grew up. I was about to graduate with an MBA and was working at Universal Orlando at the time. I thought, "Why not? Let's see if we are made of the right stuff." Four years later we are still here.

Memorable first job: I worked at the Pisgah Inn, up on the Blue Ridge Parkway, in the kitchen when I was 16 years old. The owner, Bruce O'Connell, had me cleaning the trout that would come daily to the Inn from the trout farm. I finally talked him into letting me wait tables in the dining room. He says I have a job anytime I want to come back.

Professional tip: Be authentic. Believe in yourself. Underpromise and overdeliver.

Key education/training: Bachelor's degree in hospitality management from Florida International University, master's in business administration from Rollins College. Working for Disney, Universal and the hospitality industry taught me about exceeding expectations and "wowing" a customer. Those lessons apply even in the sewers.

Role models: My dad and my Aunt Val. Multiple friends in business along the way.

Currently reading: "Improving Your Serve" by Charles Swindoll and "Parenting with Love and Logic" by Foster Cline and Jim Fay.

Business news sources you regularly use: Asheville Citizen-Times, Wall Street Journal, WNC Business Journal, water industry publications.

Bookmarked Web site(s) include: N.C. American Water Works Association, N.C. Rural Water Association, UNC School of Government Cities and Counties listing, weather.com and Sherwin Williams.

Favorite place to do lunch: Sunny Side Café on Haywood Road.

Currently in your CD player or Ipod: "There is a Place" from Biltmore Baptist Church Choir.

On your plate in 2006: Managing all the growth as we expand across the state, hiring quality employees, finding the right partners to support our business and continuing to deliver the desired results on each project we complete.

Volunteer/civic interests: Lance Armstrong Foundation, Carolina Day School.

What you do to unwind and de-stress: Travel. Call my girlfriends.

Notable quote about business in the Asheville area: "Call Annice at the SBTDC - she knows everyone!"

Address/location of business office and contact info : Carolina Management Team - P.O. Box 1409, Enka, NC 28728

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Wendy Banks, co-owner of Carolina Management Team, stands before the 5-million-gallon water tank her company painted at the North Fork Reservoir Water Treatment Plant in Black Mountain.