

# THE BUILDER'S JOURNAL™

South Central Michigan Edition



**Hilltop Contracting, Inc.**  
**This Team Achieves Excellence by Confidently  
Rising to Every Challenge**

# Hilltop Contracting, Inc.

## This Team Achieves Excellence by Confidently Rising to Every Challenge

By Marilyn Cauthen

Don Koveleski and his wife, Brenda, have built and maintained a superb reputation in Jackson and Ann Arbor for their family-owned company. Every team member at Hilltop Contracting, Inc. is uncompromising when it comes to open, honest communication.

“An excellent reputation is very important to us and we reach this goal through one-on-one communication with clients, architects, and subcontractors,” stated Don.

Experience in construction began for Don at the age of 12 when he worked with his brother’s company building new homes during the summer of 1980. While studying architecture and construction in high school, Don gained more diverse experience in the next several years doing basement waterproofing and commercial construction until the age of 18, when he embarked on a four-year apprenticeship in residential and commercial construction. At the end of his extensive training, he became a journeyman and dedicated himself to the building industry until he founded Hilltop Contracting, Inc. in June of 1997.

The company builds custom homes and specializes in unique remodeling projects of various sizes. With a combined total of over 100 years experience, the team, comprised of 9 employees, brings not only expertise but also quality craftsmanship to every job site. They anticipate both collective and individual challenges from each situation and meeting the challenge head on is what drives the team to work at a high level of excellence. Don smiled, “If it is not a challenge, it’s not fun.” This company philoso-



Dear Don, Brian and I want to express in writing how much we appreciate the job well done by you and your workman. We have been very pleased with the results of all your hard labor and specifically want to commend Doug for the many areas he supervised. Also, the detail work done by Doug and Phil on our oak staircase, it is beautiful and we receive many compliments on it.

—Brian & Ruth Harrington



This lakeside all-seasons room which has hardwood floors and a hardwood tongue and groove ceiling that is brought together with a custom plastering technique called Craquelatto which gives the walls a cracked and aged look. (Inset photo) the exterior lakeside view of this perfectly remodeled Lake Columbia home.



phy applies to both new home building and any type of remodeling in the residential or commercial field. Don emphasized, "In order to ensure client satisfaction, we specialize in extensive detail, no matter how difficult the job is. Most of our work is done in house and we do on-site fabrication." This allows the team to demonstrate their skills and company ethics by offering supreme work at an affordable cost to the client.

Brown's Lake in Jackson County boasts one of the most unique building projects done by Hilltop. It was a complete renovation and addition consisting of 6,700 square feet. Once finished, it was not only beautiful, but also very eye catching for this area, due to the architectural design style of Eastern India. Some of the Old World features included a foyer with faux painting on the walls and an inlaid marble tile medallion on the floor with a solid Meranti Mahogany custom built door. The kitchen was relocated from the back of the house to the front facing the lake and the Cherry wood cabinets were moved from the first floor to the new lower level additional kitchen. The original gabled roofs were replaced with

Hip roofs, so that they would simulate the roofs found in the Mumbai (formerly Bombay) region of India, along with overhangs, ranging from four to six feet wide with no gutters. Don indicated that there were several

challenging features, which included EIFS (Exterior Insulating Finish System) corbels built to resemble a post and beam structure. This is a maintenance free system. All concrete floors were left intact and concrete diamond bits were required for core drilling into the floor. The clear pine window jambs were stained with a medium stain and an all-natural polyurethane was used on the maple casing throughout the home. "We used about 25 different paint colors and added 95 new doors and windows bringing in more light." Don added, "This ended up

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Dear Hilltop: What can I say? You made my dream come true. I've always wanted to build a house to my specifications but everyone said how much trouble it might be so I waited until now. After three years sketching on graph paper my personal castle is in true form with a beautiful lake view and everything I wanted.

Your architect truly got the feel of my sketches and found room that I certainly did not see for storage and closets while maintaining my original designs. Don then gave me very detailed prints of who was to supply what and the cost breakdowns for each phase so there would be no questions when it came time for the final check to be written. All through the project Don kept in constant contact with me getting ideas, giving advice, and pitching new ideas my way.

Meeting the crew was fun, Corey, Mike and Matt were superb to have around. They joked, and truly seemed to enjoy each day at work. These men listened and explained when I wondered why something was to be done a certain way. Of course, their professionalism showed every single day. Believe it or not, I never heard a bad word out of any of their mouths the entire 7 months they were on site. You can tell that the sub contractors respect Hilltop and the crew because of their quick responses to work details.

I was open to new ideas with materials and different looks and Don sensed that with his suggestions. Every time I chose something not in the original plan it was made clear to me the additional cost and I had complete control on adding or not. When you build, the bottom line is important, but so is overall pleasure. Surprisingly, part of the pleasure for me was just to drive up and see the crew establishing MY dream for me.

It is doubtful, that other companies would have a ground breaking day with a brand new shovel and pictures. Don and Brenda were more than eager to show me details on their house or houses the company had worked on so I'd get a better idea before choosing for my home. I truly feel that I could call Hilltop anytime in the future for advice or help if need be, they became friends who have made my building experience wonderful.

—Sherry Foist



Natural colored trim, built-in curio cabinet, entertainment center, and fireplace make this living room, which is located just off the kitchen, a great place to relax after a gourmet meal.

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being a great project and everyone was happy with the outcome.”

The Hilltop team includes Brenda and the couple’s two sons, Deuane and Justin. Deuane works as a full-time staff member and Justin, at 13 years old, has spent his last three summers learning the trade. Brenda, described as a key component of Hilltop, runs the office and handles all of the bookkeeping. Don insisted, “Without her, I would not be able to do what I do.” Doug, Brenda’s brother has been with Hilltop since 6 months after the company was founded. Doug has worked side-by-side with Don for 2 years learning the trade, and now Doug currently oversees all projects. Don has placed all of his confidence in his staff and he feels it is vital that all of his team enjoys what they do, giving 100% so that all of their clients are completely satisfied when the construction is complete. “I

have great in-house carpenters that I keep very busy year round and I’m proud to say I’ve never had to lay anyone off.” He quickly added, “We build relationships with subcontractors, as well as our clients. We want to be good friends with all of our clients.”

All problems that arise are consistently handled with open communication. Don firmly stated, “We will do everything we can to try to work out conflicts and this is possible if we all cooperate. It’s all about working together.” They consistently use trustworthy subcontractors and architects in Jackson and Ann Arbor. “We are also able to offer interior decorating services utilizing local professionals.” Client satisfaction is such that an extremely large amount of referrals are from previous clients. This midsize company is highly respected and although they have reached their growth objectives,

Dear Don: Both Carol & I would like to express our appreciation to you and your staff of professional installers for the work performed at our residence this summer. Your involvement in the preplanning stages of the project was an added bonus for us, The ideas you expressed went a long way in helping us understand the complexities associated with a project of this magnitude.

Besides the professional skills and quality workmanship demonstrated by your team, the one thing that we truly enjoyed was the 30 minutes at the end of each and every day where everyone pitched in to clean their work area. Carol wanted to hire the guys to do our cleaning because of their thoroughness.

—Ron & Carol Hicks

they do not anticipate expanding too much more so that they are able to maintain “near perfect” quality. Although their preference is in extensive remodeling, Don indicated they are at a comfortable level with all projects at the present time. “We are meeting all of our previous objectives. We’re doing great right now, growing from about 10 projects to 50 a year.”

In addition to building and remodeling, Hilltop is a member of the National Home Builders Association, Michigan Home Builders Association, Jackson Home Builders Association, the Marble Institute of America, and National Registers Who’s Who. Don believes it is very important to be involved in the building industry on many levels. This dynamic team has a viable history in construction and Don and Brenda definitely plan to retire as builders some time in the distant future. It has always been and will continue to be their desire to establish a strong company that will be passed on to their sons as a legacy they will eagerly receive as their own.

For more information about Hilltop Contracting, Inc., contact Don or Brenda Koveleski at 517.529.4952 or visit their website at [www.hilltopcontracting.com](http://www.hilltopcontracting.com). Their e-mail address is [info@hilltopcontracting.com](mailto:info@hilltopcontracting.com).

**TBJ**

Dear Don: All the work you have done at my home over the years is top quality. It has been a pleasure to have you and your workers around! Each night things are cleaned up and left in a tidy way for the next day’s work. At the end of the job I can count on all stray nails and little bits and pieces being picked up. This has been greatly appreciated.

I highly recommend Hilltop Contracting to anyone with remodeling or new building projects. As you say, you “do it all!” And to perfection, I might add.

—Nancy McCormack



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