

ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS

Reputation cast in stone



Robert Inglis/The Daily Item

Charles Rager, co-founder of Sun Precast Company, left, and Joe Schmadel, president of Sun Precast Company in Beaver Springs, talk about the capabilities of their company in their workshop.

Sun Precast garners awards for work

By **Tricia Pursell**
The Daily Item

BEAVERSPRINGS — The next time you stroll through the Longwood Children's Garden in Kennett Square, take a tour at the Hershey Museum, or walk the campus of an Ivy League university, you will see the work of Sun Precast Co. Inc.

The business, though hidden away in rural Beaver Springs, has developed 100 percent custom, higher-end architecture now found throughout the country.

Over the past five years, the business's 25 highly qualified employees have completed cast stone work for Yale, Notre Dame, and Penn State universities, the U.S. Naval Academy and Air Force, Mohegan Sun, and Federal Reserve Bank.



"We've earned the reputation over the years of being one of the more premium producers," said president Joe Schmadel.

In the last three years, Sun Precast has won 11 national awards, recognizing excellence in the manufacturing and design of cast stone projects. Several of them have been for historic restoration projects, such as the Warner Theatre in Erie, and most recently a front-entry arch that leads into a courtyard at the more than 100-year-old Princeton University Press building — a project two years in the making that earned them one of four awards this year. Another was for their craftsmanship on a luxury home in eastern Pennsylvania.

Sun Precast remains at the top of the

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Money

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list for quality, detailed restoration work. Their name and reputation are what often gets them the job in the competitive market.

In addition to work at a number of school districts and churches, Sun Precast has been the artist behind local projects including the restoration of Bucknell University's Carnegie and Dana Engineering buildings, an expansion at Evangelical Community Hospital, and the Selinsgrove municipal building and library.

Every year, they complete 70 to 80 higher-end projects of all sizes, from Maine to Georgia to Illinois.

Restoration of historical architecture holds a special place

in their hearts.

Some projects call for restoration work on severely deteriorated buildings. But they like a challenge.

"We tend to look at things that other people won't try," Schmadel said.

The work allows them to use what they have the best — creativity.

"That's really where the great success of our company has come from," said Charles Rager, who founded Sun Precast in 1978, along with Neil Shoreman. Begun in a garage, the business eventually grew and moved into a much bigger space, its current location on Ridge Road. In 2004, the men sold the business to its employees. They remain as part-time employees and members on the board of directors.

Other current projects include benches for Syracuse University, which will include LED lighting meant to look like fireflies.

And material for a high-end retail store on Fifth Avenue in New York City, made to look like imported

Travertine from Italy. The durability is similar, and the average person cannot tell the difference.

So, they say, the next time you see an old building with detailed architecture, ask yourself: Is that real marble?

Or is that Sun Precast?

Sun Precast is certified by the Architectural Precast Association and the Cast Stone Institute.

More information is available by calling 658-8000 or visiting www.sunprecast.com.



Steve Arnold, of McClure, uses a jig saw to cut out a letter mold Wednesday morning at the Sun Precast Company in Beaver Springs.

Robert Inglis