

Manous Design celebrates 25 years

By SABRINA GARRETT

sgarrett@wilsonpost.com

Take a drive down West Main Street in Lebanon and you'll see more than a dozen buildings designed by architect **Mike Manous**.

Viewing his work on a daily basis has kept Manous' passion for design going strong for nearly three decades. On Sept. 20 his company, Manous Design, will celebrate its 25th anniversary.

"The best thing I can say about having the chance to work in Wilson County is you drive up the road and see the things you've been involved in," Manous said. "You get to see the effect of what you do. It is a collaborative effort with our clients. But it's very satisfying to see what you've worked on over the years. It keeps you going."

Manous Design is responsible for more than 100 structures in Wilson County, including CedarStone Bank, Wilson Bank & Trust, the Jimmy Floyd Family Center, Five Oaks Clubhouse, The Roxy Theatre, the new general Aviation Terminal at the Lebanon Municipal Airport, the Wilson County Expo Center, Sellars Park, Cedar Creek Yacht Club, Maple Hill Church of Christ, and the new Lebanon Spe-



Mike Manous founded Manous Design 25 years ago.

DALLUS WHITFIELD



Manous Design is located in the old arcade building on the Lebanon Public Square.

cial School district offices.

Manous is originally from Knoxville. He moved to Middle Tennessee in the 1980s.

"Bridgestone bought Firestone back in '86, and they moved the corporate headquarters from Akron to Nashville. I was working for the engineering firm that got the contract for their work," he explained.

After that he worked with another large firm, Earl Swensson Associates, in Nashville.

He and wife, **Rhonda**, decided to build their home in Wilson County.

"We were looking for land and came out to Wilson County and found a neighborhood that had just started. There were no other house there. We thought, 'This feels good,'" he recalled. "We built our home, and I decided I'd had enough of big firms. I wanted to start my own."

He said that there was not another architect firm in Lebanon, so it was a "no brainer."

Six years ago, Manous and **Hal Bone** purchased the old arcade building on the Lebanon Public Square and transformed it into a chic boutique office space.

It is the home of Manous Design.

Today, Manous Design employs four, including a licensed engineer

and two designers, and they are licensed to work in 11 states.

"We followed Performance Food Group around building distribution centers for them in California, Illinois, Texas, Indiana, Florida," he said.

They also do work in several counties in Tennessee. Currently, they have four projects in Gallatin.

Manous said 95 percent of their business is repeat business – and that's a huge compliment.

"We never know when someone we worked for 10 years ago is going to call us up," he said. "You have to be willing to step in and help."

He also noted that he does not dictate style to his clients.

"As an architect you have to realize that quickly. The quickest way to lose a client is to shove something down their throat that they don't want," he said. "I try to create really functional, workable floorplans."

In his spare time, Manous enjoys boating. His wife, Rhonda, is an avid golfer – but that isn't his cup of tea.

"I have enough frustration. I don't need to be frustrated in my time off," he joked. "I admire the people who do (golf), that's just not for me."

The couple has two sons, **Destin** and **Derek**.