

Employees Buy Dowcraft Corp.

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By A. TYLER SETTLE

FALCONER — Dowcraft Corp. has been sold for about \$9 million and the proud new owners are 43 of the company's employees, a spokesman told *The Post-Journal* today.

Offers for the Falconer-based company were made by three other investor groups in the last 18 months but company shareholders voted to sell the company to six members of the active management and other employees, said Harry Nicholson, chairman and CEO of Dowcraft Corp.

The sale was made final last Friday, Nicholson said, with the approximately 20,000 shares in the corporation selling for \$450 each.

The six key managers have the controlling interest while the other 37 employees own the balance, Nicholson said.

"The employees decided to buy the company to maintain continuity, control, balance and to maintain jobs in the community," Nicholson said.

This is especially important in an area where some company buyouts have meant subsequent cutbacks and layoffs, he said.

"The employees really wanted this," Nicholson said proudly. "It's good news for the community."

Adding to the mood of celebration is the fact that the new ownership took effect just two days before Dowcraft's 30th birthday, Nicholson said.

On June 16, 1961, G. Elving Lundine — the late father of New York's Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine — founded Dowcraft Corp., a well-known producer of floor-to-ceiling wall partitions and specialized metal computer cabinets.

In the early 1970s, Ellison Bronze Co. Inc. was saved from liquidation and acquired by Lundine's group.

In 1988, D.C. Rollform Corp., another Dowcraft subsidiary, was formed.

This made for one big company with four locations, which is still the

case today. Dowcraft and Ellison Bronze are located in Falconer and D.C. Rollform, as well as another small office of Dowcraft, are in Jamestown.

In the early 1980s, shortly before Lundine's death, an Employees Stock Ownership Plan was put into place. Eventually this plan accounted for 70 percent of the company's ownership, Nicholson said.

Earlier this year, 55 percent of that 70 percent was owned by active management and 15 percent by retired employees.

For the 30 years prior to that, the investors had "remained the same," Nicholson said.

"They were passive investors — friend's of (Lundine's) who put money into the company," he said.

Now the employee-owned company can thrive on the energy from within and the community can be assured of the desired stability, Nicholson said.