

Scott Van Stee, president of Van Stee Corp., holds part of a drawer. The company is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

P-J photo by Joe R. Luzzo

Van Stee said the firm makes complete bedroom suites from start to finish.

"Basically everything but the mattress.

"Our main style has been colonial," he continued, "but we're just coming out with a new Shaker/casual style."

Van Stee said the company has had outside designers over the years but the new group was designed largely by its sales group and in-house designers.

He said the firm has two business stages, with the contract segment accounting for the majority of its output for the last 10 years. The second stage is retail that Van Stee is concentrating on now with the addition of new pieces to its present lines in solid maple and cherry.

Van Stee said most of the wood comes from about a 100-mile radius, noting,

"Pennsylvania cherry is about the best we can get."

The company kiln-dries some of its wood but most of that used is bought ready-dried.

"We try to buy as much local as possible," Van Stee said of the firm's purchases.

"There's a lot of attention to detail," the company president said, "a lot of fine sanding and so forth. Van Stee is known as a quality line of bedroom furniture."

The firm's leader said he still sees a lot of its furniture around the country that was made in the 1940s and 1950s.

As for Van Stee's primary market, he said, "We're mainly in the Northeast but

we're starting to expand into the northern United States. We really haven't done too much in the South but we have stores nationwide."

The company recently created a new sales territory embracing Oregon, western Idaho and Alaska. About 18 months ago, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa were established as a sales area.

Van Stee finds it is important to visit the sales representatives and travel with them through their territories occasionally.

"We do some regional markets," he said, citing among them New England, Nashville, Atlanta and Chicago.

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