

The Burlington County Times

Go green for Dad



JSH international executives (from left) Peter Hovnanian, co-owner; Kevin Mulvihill, CEO; and co-owner Stephen Hovnanian stand with Nature's Wonder APEX-10, one of three products the company sells that take into account the latest trend to "go green." DENNIS MCDONALD / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

By: CHRIS BISHOP Burlington County Times

Jirair S. Hovnanian, an immigrant who founded a local home building company, loved roses and gardening.

Founder of J.S. Hovnanian & Sons in Mount Laurel, Hovnanian adored all kinds of plants.

Now his two sons, who run the company, headquartered on Birchfield Drive, are launching a product line that they say was inspired by their father, who died at age 80 in 2007.

Brothers Peter and Stephen Hovnanian, both residents of Moorestown, have launched a company that develops and sells products that take into account the latest trend to "go green." JSH international, named after Jirair Hovnanian, sells food-service, wastewater and agricultural products derived from a peat extraction process brought to market by the company's patriarch.

"He was the visionary behind this," said Peter Hovnanian, 57. "He was a real innovator." "Dad used to say that growing a business is like growing a garden," said Stephen Hovnanian, 59. The new product "represents the diversification that we have believed in for so long," Peter Hovnanian said.

One of JSHi's product lines, Greenovative Technologies, breaks down oils and grease in traps and pipes and is being marketed to companies such as chain restaurants as well as hospitals and colleges, said JSH chief executive Kevin Mulvihill.

Another product, Prodex's Biological Activity Enhancer, stimulates microorganisms used in wastewater treatment, a process that converts waste to energy without chemicals.

A report from Paul Phillips, superintendent of operations for the Cinnaminson Sewerage

Authority, said Prodex had saved the authority \$100,000 in operational and sludge hauling.

The product cut the need of various chemicals previously used to meet permit requirements. The third line of products is Nature's Wonder APEX-10, an organic liquid that strengthens plants by stimulating growth.

Joseph's Landscaping & Irrigation in Monroe, Gloucester County, has used the product with success, according to Pete Haran, director of operations. In an e-mail interview, he said the company has reduced its plant loss by 50 percent, saving Joseph's the expense of the labor and materials needed to replace them.

He said the addition of Nature's Wonder to the company's plants "made a huge difference." Mulvihill, who hails from the West Coast, met the elder Hovnanian 40 years ago and was impressed by his concern for the environment. Mulvihill and his staff of eight will work from the Mount Laurel office to market the new initiative.

The three lines are manufactured in a plant in Akron, Ohio. Though these products have been quietly used for a few years, partly in test phases by groups such as the sewerage authority and Joseph's, the Hovnanian company felt the time was right for a major promotion. It was especially appropriate with the recent emphasis on green building and technology, said the brothers, whose homebuilding company has constructed thousands of homes in the South Jersey region.

Peter Hovnanian said the company had invested "millions" in JSHi, but did not give specific numbers. The homebuilding company and JSHi are privately held and the owners do not supply revenue figures. "This is not a snake oil product," concluded Mulvihill. "The Hovnanian name is involved with this."

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August 22, 2010

http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/news_details/article/26/2010/august/22/go-green-for-dad-1.html

