

# Woman contractor turns heads and wins statewide recognition

By **EMILY MARTIN**

*Staff Writer*

**GREENCASTLE** - Pamala Anderson, owner of Anderson Construction, may not think of herself as doing a "man's job" but there aren't too many women who spend their days installing drywall, plastering and tackling other home renovation projects for a living.

"I get a lot of attention because I'm female, but I don't really think about that -- and it's not an issue with the men that I work with," said Anderson, who recently was singled out for statewide honors.

The Greencastle woman has been named Small Contractor of the Year by the Pennsylvania Builders Association, but construction has not always been her forte.

Former director of speech pathology for Chambersburg Hospital, she began dabbling with home renovation in 1986, when she and her husband, Tom, bought an eight-room farmhouse fixer-upper on Grindstone Hill Road.

"I really liked the whole process of fixing up our home," Anderson said.

Five years later, at the age of 35, Anderson traded her career in speech therapy for one in construction. She was the co-owner of P&T Construction until 1997, when she and her partner "went our separate ways." Although low on self confidence in a male-dominated field, Anderson was encouraged to start her own business by fellow members of the Franklin County Builders Association, which she joined in 1994.



**Pamala Anderson, owner of Anderson Construction in Greencastle, works on a ceiling in one of her homes she's remodeling in Chambersburg.**

Surprisingly, Anderson said many of the qualities she needed as a speech pathologist are the same ones she needs to run her business.

Most people don't realize the amount of management that goes into running a business. A lot of people can do the hands-on aspects, but management of jobs and materials is crucial, especially in big projects to make them run smoothly. "Lucky for me, my strong point is managing."

Anderson said she gets by with a little help from her friends when it comes to areas of construction she's not familiar with.

"The members of the Franklin County Builders Association have helped me tremendously."

While she likes to do one new house a year, Anderson specializes in interior renovations and likes to do just about everything, including demolition, framing, painting, plastering and drywall. For other projects like plumbing and electrical work, Anderson hires subcontractors.

"Even the areas of work I subcontract out, I still do everything I can to help the workers so we can get the project done quickly," said Anderson, who runs her business out of her home.

Anderson has not only made her mark as a hard worker, she is also active in the builders association, having served as president, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

In addition to local participation, she is active at the state level in the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA), serving as the south central regional vice president and the chairman of the Workforce Development Committee. That position requires her to visit schools and other contractors, encouraging youth to enter into the field.

She also participates in the community projects of both the local and state builders associations, including Habitat for Humanity.

Anderson was named the PBA's Small Contractor of the Year after being nominated by other members of the association.

The award cites her significant contributions to the home building industry, contributions to her state and local associations and her active participation in community affairs. The award is the highest honor given to small contractors by PBA, and Anderson is the first woman to receive it. Anderson said she was surprised when she learned she was this year's recipient, noting that the help and dedication of so many of her colleagues has strengthened her confidence and passion for the vocation.

The feeling of accomplishment when a tough project is completed is much more fulfilling than any type of award, she said.