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Through The Years

Alfonzo Pavlicek
*Van Delden On-Site
Wastewater Systems*



About the only thing that would take Alfonzo Pavlicek away from his job at Van Delden On-Site Wastewater Systems is a winning lottery ticket.

Pavlicek is celebrating his 50th anniversary at Van Delden in February, and he doesn't plan on retiring unless he wins the lottery. "If I did that I would have to have someone take my place."

But Pavlicek is content installing wastewater systems in commercial and residential projects like he has since the second week of February 1960. Garrett Van Delden, co-owner, believes Pavlicek has installed more than 3,400 systems. Pavlicek thinks the number is more like 4,500.

"I worked for Garrett's dad, Gary, for about 25 years, and then his son took over, and I guess that's another 25 years," Pavlicek said. "My grandpa always said that hard work never killed anybody, so

maybe if I keep doing this, maybe I could work another 25 years for Garrett's son! That would be crazy, wouldn't it?"

Pavlicek says the job is hard, but it used to be a lot harder. "We always had the equipment but we didn't have the other stuff you needed," he said. "If it was rock, you had to use a jackhammer – 115-pounder all day long. Now they have these big hammers that attach to the machines. The one I use is a thousand-pounder and that thing breaks rock like crazy."

One of the biggest jobs Pavlicek has worked on is the Southwest High School where he installed 15 1,000-gallon septic tanks and about 6,000 ft. of lateral lines.

"If you want to give credit to anybody, give credit to my wife, Martha," Pavlicek said. "She is the one that stayed with me all these years. We have been married about 41 years. She gave me four beautiful kids – three boys and a daughter. I knew her since she was probably 15 years old."

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"I don't know how she put up with me for so many years. When my kids were all little, I was working at least 70 hours a week, just to make ends meet. Back then it was still hard. Nowadays I don't know how people raise kids."

"When we got married I told my wife, I was already 27 and I didn't want to be waiting around for 10 years to have kids. I wanted them right away. I wanted to enjoy them when I got older. Believe it or not, in nine or 10 months, she had the first boy."

Pavlicek was born Dec. 22 1940 and raised in Jourdanton, TX. "I lived there with my mother, my dad and my sister."

"I went to Jourdanton High School, but I didn't graduate, I hate to say it, but I passed the 11th. Since my dad had passed away and it was my mother and my sister at home, I decided I was going to have to support them."

Pavlicek drove a truck out of state for about six years before he went to work at Van Delden. He eventually bought a house in San Antonio to be closer to work.

Family is foremost with Pavlicek. "We have a Pavlicek reunion every year in Praha, TX, towards Houston. It's at a big Catholic church that has been there probably 200 years. Of course, with a family reunion, you know there is going to be plenty of cold beer and dominoes and food."

He enjoys spending time with his children, Alfons III, LeJon, Debra and Russell and nine grandchildren. All the children graduated from McCollum High

School and the boys served in the U.S. Navy. Debra earned a degree in respiratory therapy.

"Whenever I have the chance to go fishing with my sons, that's how I let off steam or stress."

"I like to fish for bass and blue cats. I like to catch those blue cats around Amarillo. We go there at least one week every year and stay a week at the lake and come back with some good fish."

When asked if there was one thing he hasn't done but would like to do, Pavlicek said, "Probably win the lottery. I have been to Vegas – lost; been to Louisiana – lost. With Vegas, if you are going over there just to mess around, that's fine. But if you think you are going to go there and win, you're wrong."

Pavlicek is a believer that hard work is the way not only to success, but also to longevity in life. "Most of my friends that went to school with me, they went into the service or whatever, and retired here or there."

"I hate to say it, but most of them didn't last more than four years, five years, and then they were dead. Everyone says that's what keeps you going. I am in fairly good health and staying busy all the time. That's life. You've just got to keep truckin'."

"I can thank the good Lord that I was born here in the United States. Hopefully there will be a job out there for everybody that wants to work, because you have to work nowadays. I can't see the government taking care of you and the kids. You just have to do it on your own."

–kf