

CEO Profile: Brent Dewey owns Trout Club, mini real-estate "empire"

NEWARK – Brent Dewey found school a little boring. “I was more interested in doing something than sitting in class,” he recalled. So 1989 while he was still an undergraduate at OSU, he remodeled his first house. “It’s kind of why I dropped out of school,” he explained.

Now, he and his wife, Agata, oversee a Newark-based multi-million-dollar construction and real estate business called AKD Construction, building dozens of retail stores as well as various real estate buys, flips and rehabs. Together they own dozens of houses and hundreds of apartments. That includes The Trout Club Public Resort.

“We’ve got quite an empire of real estate now,” Dewey said. “The Trout Club was just one of those things that came along.”



Brent Dewey oversees a Newark-based construction and real estate business called AKD Construction, building dozens of retail stores as well as various real estate buys, flips and rehabs. (Photo: Sara C. Tobias, Sara C. Tobias/The Advocate)

Dewey, now 48, and his wife paid almost \$700,000 in 2014 to purchase the former Licking Springs Golf and Trout Club. They spent eight months and more than \$2.4 million to

restore and remodel it into The Trout Club Public Resort. Its grand opening was Memorial Day, 2015.

Then tragedy struck in November 2015. A fire broke out in a garage housing some golf carts. It destroyed part of the clubhouse/restaurant building. Damages were in the \$1.4 million range. It forced the facility to close for seven months, leaving Dewey no choice but to restore the building he had just restored.

Finally, The Trout Club reopened in May 2016. "It's probably been the most rewarding project I've ever done," Dewey said, "and probably ever will do."

Seriously ...

Q. What do you enjoy most about your job?

A. I get to meet all kinds of interesting people from around Ohio and beyond. It has really helped me with my construction business (AKD Construction) more than expected.

Q. What are you most proud of about your career?

A. That I have been able to employ and retain some amazing, hardworking people in all of our businesses that make me look good. The Trout Club is for sure a great example of our team's passion to restore great properties.

Q. What has been the biggest challenge in leading The Trout Club?

A. Stepping in from a construction background to running a small resort with little to no experience. The Trout Club has a little of everything. Restaurant, bars, motel rooms, weddings/events, a pool, live entertainment and of course golf. I didn't know much about any of these, but it really comes down to the right people running each of them that you can trust.

Q. What would you like people to know about The Trout Club they may not know?

A. That we are open to the public! When we opened up in 2015, we realized there was a misunderstanding in the community that the place was a private club when in fact it has always been open to the public. Also, that we have wonderful food and an amazing atmosphere to enjoy on your visit.

Q. How has The Trout Club changed through the years?

A. It started as a working family farm in the 1800's. It became a trout farm due to our amazing natural springs and water quality on the property. The golf course came along in 1960 and when the Wolfe family owned it, people started coming up to enjoy great food, entertainment and the pool. We have only expanded and updated on what was already an amazing piece of Licking County history. I always say none of us really own the land. We are just the temporary stewards of the land and the mortgage payers for a small amount of time. Someday, someone else will get to do all this hard work.

Breakout Box:

The Trout Club Public Resort is located at 2250 Horns Hill Road in Newark. For more information call 740-366-2770 or log on www.thetroutclub.com.