

Video Included: Update On Demolition Of Old Alton Business, Mac Recalls Lenhardt Tool and Die Days

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February 17 2023 3:03 PM



ALTON - The demolition of the building that once housed the old Duncan Foundry and then Lenhardt Tool and Die businesses at 501 Piasa Street in Alton by SLT Demolition in St. Louis is showing progress each day. Much has been accomplished this week with demolition from the roof to the floor of parts of the old building.

Duncan Foundry opened in Alton in 1884, historian Don Huber said. Beams and metal have been coming down each day. Bulldozers have been very active this week and metal is being actively recycled from the tear-down.

Duncan Foundry became Lenhardt Tool and Die in 1983. Jack Lenhardt was the owner of the business at that time.

Mac Lenhardt, the owner of Mac's in Downtown Alton, worked at Lenhardt Tool and Die for many years from 1983 to 2003. His father owned the tool and die business until 2018 when he closed it.

Mac also started Mac's in downtown Alton on Dec. 16, 1983, and he continues to work a second job today in a Granite City machine shop. Mac said the work at Lenhardt Tool and Die wasn't always easy and those who worked there were such dedicated workers and the expectations were always high.



Shane Twichell, president of SLT Demolition in St. Louis, said the demolition is progressing in a solid fashion so far.

“Right now, we have an excavator with a sheer attachment to remove the building and another with a bucket with a thumb to help load out the material,” he added. “We are recycling the metal and trucks come and take it to Alton Materials. I have known the

guy at Alton Materials - Myles Lynch - for a very long time. We did have to do a lot of labor torch cutting to make room for the machines in the beginning, which did slow the process down. We are pretty much taking the building down bay by bay.”

Most of what is being removed from the old building is being recycled, Twichell said. Asked how long the process will take, he said that is a good question and it depends on the concrete size that remains once the building is down. Twichell didn’t really want to pinpoint an exact date the demolition would be over because there is still a considerable amount of work left in the project.

Mac said his dad paid \$300,000 for the old Duncan Foundry in 1983 and he did it mostly for the heavy equipment that remained in the business.

“I have a lot of positive memories from the old Lenhardt Tool and Die,” he said. “I learned the art of old-fashioned work from predominantly German, Irish, and Italians and all who worked there. I have a lot of respect for those guys. I was very fortunate to make a decent living but it was tough at times.”

Mac said he hopes the City of Alton, now the owners of the property, develop the area after the demolition and cleanup are finished.

“I have no doubt that it is a great location,” Mac added. “I think we have done a lot for Downtown with the other businesses, and I see a great future for Downtown Alton. I think this will be an asset to Alton. They are doing the right thing cleaning up Downtown Alton even more.”

