



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Pictured are HMC Builder's sales and marketing manager Tara Burke and office manager Melanie Harbin.

HMC rebrand highlights the faces behind the business

BY CALEB GILBERT
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SENECA — Those driving through Oconee County may have noticed HMC Gutters' new branding, which includes a cartoon depiction of two women representing the brand.

Those aren't just cartoons, but representations of sales and marketing manager Tara Burke and office manager Melanie Harbin — the friendly faces people will see or hear when inquiring about a possible job.

Both women shared HMC's capabilities and as its mission in the community with The Journal.

"The gutter side of things — we began as a small crew and we've grown into a full-service, locally trusted gutter company," Burke said. "Honestly, it was a small thing on the side and then the need for it just grew. Rooflines and bigger homes these days call for bigger

gutters. Within the last four or five years, it's really grown to be about half of the company."

Burke talked about the difference HMC holds over competitors.

"We've got seven- and eight-inch K-style gutters, eight-inch half-round, six-inch half-round," she said. "We've got a lot of profiles that some of our competitors don't have."

Burke said that sets them apart.

"Having the construction company, we do have heavy machinery and stuff to back us and allow us to get into certain projects, and things that your average gutter company wouldn't be able to handle," she said.

Customer service is also a place where HMC shines.

"We truly believe in doing things the right way — even when no one's watching," Burke said. "Sometimes, we're on second homes and no one's there, we still believe in taking care of it as if it's our own."

Burke added the company considers itself "extremely hands on."

"You're not calling some random call center and getting patched through to us," she said. "You're calling real people who live here, work here. We raise families here. We care deeply about our clients."

MORE THAN A CARTOON

Burke discussed what it's like to be a woman in a male-dominated, blue-collar business.

"We have two women in key leadership roles," she said. "It's not just random cartoon people. That's who you're calling, that's who's coming to your house."

Burke said beginning work at a blue-collar business "definitely



HMC Builders is now using cartoons for its rebranding.

took some adjusting" and confidence — later mentioning some of the skills that set her apart from her male counterparts.

"A lot of times, I can connect with the wife a lot easier," she said. "I'm not big, bad and scary, so I can appreciate what it's like to be on that side of things and just want transparency as a female. When people are coming to my house, I don't want to be sold the next best thing — I want to be sold what's right for me."

Burke later talked about Harbin, and the role she plays at HMC.

"Melanie is really the heartbeat of day-to-day operations," Burke said. "She manages scheduling, customer service, billing, communication, the consistent flow of all the moving parts that keeps the crews on the road and the customers fully informed."

Burke added Harbin is the "friendly voice" that clients hear.

"Everybody calls me the office mom," Harbin said. "I'm where it begins — people call in and I am that initial point of contact. I get all the information about what they're needing done, schedule it, and get Tara out there to vet it and then communicate from there."

And being in a blue-collar field is no problem for Harbin.

"I really enjoy it. I grew up with my dad owning his own business that was in grading and septic tanks, so I have been familiar with this kind of industry since I was kid," she said.

"We're able to relate to people, sometimes easier than men can relate to them, because we just have a softer approach and it sounds sweeter coming out," she added, laughing.

According to the two, the work is not only enjoyable, but the job's atmosphere is family oriented.

"We genuinely enjoy what we do. Water can create big problems for homes, it's something no one can avoid — it comes from the sky," Burke said. "We genuinely enjoy helping people out, treating our clients like family. ... It just feels good to do right."

"This is our home away from home. We're comfortable here," Harbin added. "We can be ourselves, get the job done, make money and I think we have just created our own little HMC family."

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