

# A few Minutes With...

Blaine Wilcock, General Manager/Owner, Conco Concrete Specialists, LLC

Blaine Wilcock is the quintessential All-American small-businessman. Partners with his father who started the contracting business in East Central Arizona 50 years ago; he describes his specialty as “everything.” Blaine and his company were awarded a contract for \$231,000 to replace the waterlines at Alchesay National Fish Hatchery 25 miles from his hometown. We got to speak to him about how things are going in Lakeside, Ariz., working with the local American population, and why he thinks the Recovery Act is good for America.



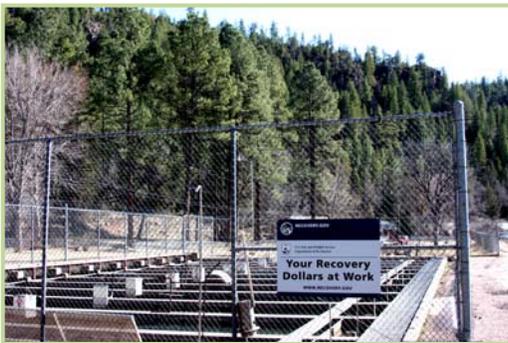
Blaine Wilcock(R) with father Kennard, in business 50 years in 2010

Describe the project that you are working on.

**I was awarded Monday the steel pipeline replacement for the Alchesay Hatchery. We'll have to saw-cut asphalt, remove asphalt, dig up old lines and replace them with new lines and new valves, and then replace the asphalt, that's a pretty general description of it.**

Why do the waterlines need to be replaced?

**I have not been out the site yet, but it's my understanding that they have rusted through, and they are paper thin in a few places and they are just waiting to rupture.**



The Recovery Act funds local hatchery improvement

So it's as much preventative as it is something that needs to happen now?

**Yes. The waterlines were built back in the 1960s; they are original to the hatchery.**

How many people do you employ?

**It depends on our work load; with what we have for work right now, there are only two of us. We'll probably gear up with at least four when we start construction.**

So you're going to be hiring two people specifically for this project?



The scenic Whiteriver, Ariz. area, home of the Alchesay-Williams NFH Complex

**Yes. I'm very pleased that the people I'm going to hire for this job will probably come out of the Whiteriver area, they'll be Native Americans so that's a good thing. Their unemployment rate is over 75%, that's pretty common in that (Native American) reservation area. I've heard that it's up near 90% right now.**

From the time you break ground, until you are finished, how long do you think it will take?

**Probably, oh, several weeks, three weeks I'd say.**

Have you worked on government projects before?

**That's all I do. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, I have a job starting with them, the first week of this month (April) building a new water tank on the Navajo reservation, I've done quite a bit with the Indian Health Service, quite a bit with the Forrest Service, the National Parks, Fish and Wildlife, the Veterans' Administration.**



Fingerling anxious to hit the open waters

What is it that you specialize in?

**Well it's kind of a small community that I live in up here, and we've learned that we'd better be able to do anything. I wouldn't say that it's anything that we specifically try to limit ourselves to...we get involved in all phases of construction, we won't build homes we don't do that, and we try to stay away from anything that's residential that isn't commercial.**



Fish eggs being spawned

How would you describe the economy in that area of East Central Arizona?

**We're really struggling; I mean we're seeing foreclosures on homes right and left. As you drive down the street I would say I see one out of six are going through that process, and quite a few people have homes that aren't worth half what they owe on them now.**

Do you think that Recovery Act projects like the one you are working on are good for your area and good for the country at large?

**Yes, definitely I do. It's giving us work, and also for the fish hatchery, if it wasn't for the Recovery Act, they wouldn't do this job, and then there would come a time where it was an emergency, and a contractor would go in there and just literally screw them because it was an emergency. But they are doing it as deferred maintenance right now, and they are able to control it because it is not an emergency situation. The Service has time to locate the fish elsewhere, so that fish aren't going to die. The project is planned, it's structured, and it really wouldn't be happening if this Recovery Act money wasn't there to do it. So it's benefiting the government, it's benefiting the fish hatchery definitely, and it's going to provide four people in this community with jobs. That's just my end of it; we have the people that are making the pipes for the project, they wouldn't have any pipe to make if it wasn't for me needing the pipe for this project, the valves, the asphalt, the trucking, it's really affecting hundreds of people even though it just looks like it's affecting me.**

Our project contractors work on projects from all over the country. For instance, we have another contractor on an Arizona project who is coming from Idaho to complete the job, but your situation is a little different, you live only about 30 minutes from your project. How do you feel about that, being able to work in your home community?

**I try to shy away from that, but it's OK (at Alchesay NFH) because my cell phone doesn't work (laughs). Seriously, it's nice to be able to come from work every day, but it seems like we can get a whole lot more done when we're way out in the middle of nowhere and no-one can bother us.**



How'd you get started in what you do?

**My daddy started it all out, in fact, next year, 2011 will be our 50<sup>th</sup> year in business!**

Congratulations. Are you optimistic about the future with your company, with the local area, with the state of Arizona the way things are heading now?

**Yes, very! Very optimistic. I think the economy will turn around, I very much hope that it does.**

Well thank you very much for the time, Blaine, and good luck.

**It's my pleasure.**