



Thank you for dedicating 38 years to our mission!

When Dan Kotek started with Couleecap he was just a young man fresh out of college. “I had just graduated from college the year before and I was working for a company that was about to go belly-up so I was looking,” Dan recalled of finding his job at Couleecap. “I actually saw the job in the newspaper, this was back in the days before you searched for a job on the internet. Had to open the classifieds in the La Crosse Tribune.” Now, nearly 38 years later, Dan will be retiring from Couleecap on January 19.

Dan started his career with Couleecap working in finance, and the majority of his career with Couleecap was spent working as a right hand man to the Director of Finance. For the last few years, he has been working as the Inventory Assistant, helping keep track of everything and anything for the Weatherization and Energy Services Crews. “It was a good transition,” Dan explained. “I was getting burnt out in finance. When I started with Couleecap, we only worked with three or four grants, when I left finance, it was up to 50. It was a lot of long hours, and I was ready for a change.”

Having worked much of his career dealing with the grants that the Energy Services programs utilize Dan was familiar with the needs and numbers making the transition easy and offering Dan a good opportunity to stay with Couleecap while also getting a change of pace.

From the Bangor area originally, Dan and his family relocated to Westby in 1988, and notes “I’m just about a native now.” In addition to working for Couleecap he is also an active community volunteer,



In his tenure with Couleecap, Dan has seen the agency grow from 3-4 grants to over 50!



serving on the Westby Area Schools School Board as well as being an advisor for the Ski Jump Royalty.

“One of the biggest changes I’ve seen over the years is the changes we’ve went through with technology,” Dan explained. “When I started we had one PC in one room, and the room was locked. We would do all of the books by hand in those days, probably for the first two or three years. Slowly we’d go and buy a few more PCs but it was a big deal back then. They cost around \$2,000 and we’d have a lot of discussions like ‘do we really need another one?’” Email also wasn’t exactly what it is today for the employees at Couleecap. Where now, many folks utilize email as a primary source of communication and helping the ability to work from home, in the decades previous it played second fiddle to phone. “Each department had one computer each eventually and there would be one person tasked with checking the Email once a week to make sure nothing important came through,” Dan explained with a chuckle. “But the piece of paper with a memo for a call, now that was something you didn’t want to lose. Back then we also used an overhead call system, and the front desk secretary would page us ‘Dan! Call on line one!’”

Perhaps one of the most major changes Dan helped to oversee was the shift to using financial programming, which was the same program (“with updates!” Dan added) that Couleecap utilized for the past 25 years up until they recently changed to a new system.

“That was pretty exciting,” Dan recalled. “We went to a lot of other different CAPs to learn about the different programs before we settled on one.”

Another huge difference Dan noted over his nearly four decades with the company was the shift from in-person work to many folks working from home.

“It’s so different,” Dan quipped. “I know many people do it every day but it just makes the office a whole different world. It used to be like a beehive in here with everyone buzzing around and now it’s much quieter. I know a lot of people love it though and having that flexibility was always one of the things that kept me working with Couleecap so its good people can do that.”

Now a-days, Dan has been enjoying the less taxing pace of Inventory Assistant as he gears up for his next chapter in life. “This job is much less complex!” Dan notes with a smile.

“I will be watching my grandkids during retirement,” Noted Dan with a smile as he shared, he’ll be spending much time with these three young grandkids, especially the two-and-a-half-year-old, which will no doubt keep him on his toes. “I do plan to take it pretty easy though,” said Dan. “I won’t sign up for too much right away, but I love to read so I’ll probably end up volunteering at the library eventually, and my wife and I love to travel so we’ll plan to do some of that in the future also.”

Dan's Retirement To Do List

1. Babysit the grandkids
2. Travel
3. Volunteer



Thank you for the memories Dan!



Enjoy your retirement!

