

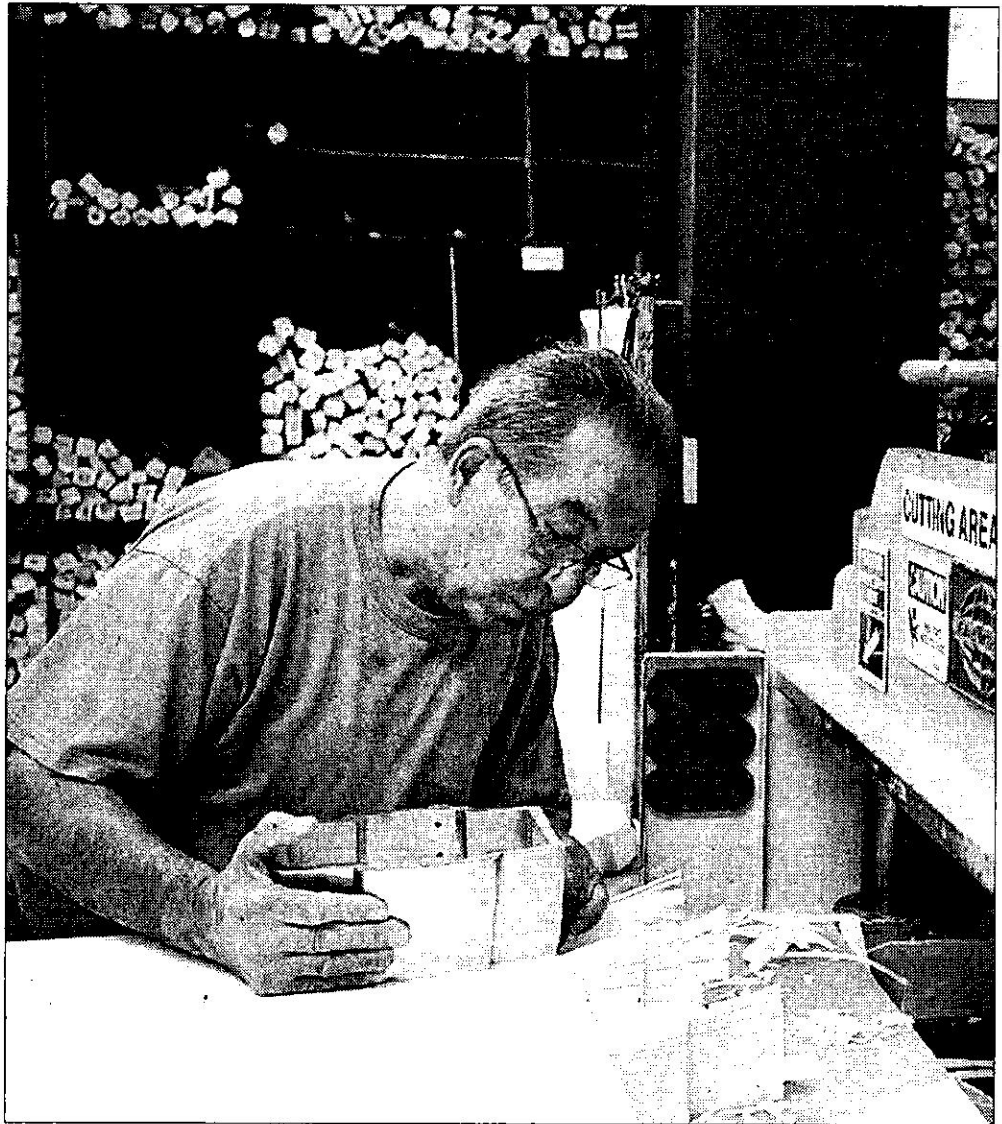
on your feet all day lifting large and heavy reams of paper onto a cutting bed. The paper is cut with a large steel die that resembles a cookie cutter. The die is placed very carefully on top of the paper. When it's in just the right position, the cutting bed slides under a metal press which pushes the die through the ream of paper. This creates the individual "blanks" which then are taken to another machine where they are folded and glued to make envelopes.

It's a job that can wear down much younger men. But remarkably, Sousa was able to keep cutting paper well into his 70s. His longtime friend and co-worker, Al Berardinelli, remarked, "Unlike the rest of us, Louis never seemed to age."

Sousa attributes this to the fact that he enjoyed his work very much. For the past 12 years, he would rise early in the morning and go to his favorite local bakery where he'd get a Portuguese pastry and a cup of coffee before driving about 40 minutes to Randolph to arrive at 7 a.m. In the envelope and printing industries, it's typical for the production day to start early in the morning. That never seemed to bother Louis Sousa.

Sousa's sense of humor and impish grin were a constant feature on the job. He also could be a bit of a practical joker by his own account: "Years ago, my son and I were working side by side on the production floor. I decided to tie a trip wire from my machine to his and every time he would try to operate his machine, I would pull the wire and it would shut off. He was so aggravated until he realized what I was doing," he said with a smile.

Elite Envelope President and CEO Dave Theriault spoke about Sousa's value to the company: "We were



Louis Sousa pays close attention to detail when cutting envelopes. COURTESY PHOTO

thrilled to have Luis join us shortly after we started Elite in 2003. We sought him out specifically. He was our first and only cutter for a long time."

Theriault went on to rave about Sousa's skill at his craft: "Luis is probably the most skilled cutter I've ever seen. His many years of experience and the pride he took in his work each day made him a key member of our staff. He solved many a problem for me."

Theriault said that keeping Sousa on staff was important to the company. A few years

back they gladly accommodated his desire to continue working on a part-time basis.

"Just having Luis around to answer questions and tackle some of the more challenging jobs was a big help," Theriault said. "Plus he's just a great guy to have on your team. He's always upbeat and works hard and very productively every day. We miss him."

Despite missing his many friends and long-time colleagues at Elite Envelope, Sousa says he is enjoying his retirement. In addition to his three children he now

has six grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. A proud family man, he enjoys spending time with all of them as much as he can. Sousa still enjoys his trips to the local bakery for coffee, except now he can do it at a more leisurely pace and include spending time with his friends catching up on the local happenings. Ever the joker, Sousa says he's teaching his great-granddaughter how to keep herself amused at restaurants by flicking sugar packets with her spoon. Some things never change.