

30 YEARS STRONG

Spear Celebrates Past, Dives Into Future

By Katie Coffin

People often ask Brian Spear why he doesn't move his business to Indianapolis.

Nestled on a rural Putnam County road is the office the Spear Corporation moved into last summer. The "new building smell" makes the statement that Roachdale, where Spear's parents began the business 30 years ago in their garage, will remain home.

"The people out here work hard," explains Spear. "It's a farming community, so a lot of the people working for us have farming backgrounds and grew up working hard. Why would we move?"

Cultivated expertise

Spear Corporation designs and constructs pools, sells pool equipment and chemicals, and offers continuing education classes for pool professionals. The company's work spans public recreational pools to competitive aquatic venues.

Certified Pool/Spa Operator (CPO) certification classes are offered on-site, covering basic knowledge, techniques and skills of pool and spa operations.

"(CPO courses) give us an opportunity to interact with the customers, to show them what we know and help with their certifications as well," Spear describes. "What's important is (for customers) to take something from this class so their facility is going to be safer, because that's what it's all about."

Fifteen years ago, John Foley left an apprenticeship program to work for Spear Corporation. At the time, he knew nothing about swimming pools or water chemistry. Now, he's a service technician and one of the CPO instructors, and he says each project is new and exciting.

"Successful completion of each job brings a sense of accomplishment and pride," Foley expresses. "There are few contractors in the pool industry that provide service like we do. Having a great product with knowledgeable and experienced staff gives us an upper edge on our competitors."

Sticking to its roots

Quality customer service has been Spear Corporation's trump card since the beginning in 1984.



Spear was 11 years old when his parents started the company, and he says his passion for the business comes from continuing what they painstakingly built.

"They (my parents) started the strong customer service, and as you grow that becomes more difficult to maintain," Spear expresses. "You have to make sure everyone on staff understands that's No. 1."

One employee in particular set the bar high for superior customer service. Karen Giles worked for Spear Corporation for 23 years, right up until losing her battle with cancer in 2013.

"She was the face of Spear Corporation; when you called, she would answer the phone," Spear recollects with a tear in his eye.

"We still hear about how she went above and beyond what she had to do because she cared so much," continues Kristie Spear, Brian's wife and marketing/relations coordinator. "She cared about helping customers, but she cared about the company as well. With us personally, she was like family."

High-profile projects

As a testament to the company's successful past and bright future,

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Spear Corporation is a leader in the aquatic industry, with a niche that spans recreational venues (top right) to competition pools. This spring, the company will construct pools for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Swimming Trials in Omaha, Nebraska.



Spear Corporation

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the Spear Corporation office walls are decorated with pictures of completed projects and accolades.

Spear Corporation built two 25-meter pools for the 2004 FINA World Short Course Championships (at Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis) and constructed an elite, 1.5 million gallon pool for the SPIRE Institute in northern Ohio.

As they did in 2012, the Spear team will design and construct the pools for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Swimming Trials in Omaha, Nebraska, as well as operate the facility during competition. They are also doing renovation work inside the IUPUI Natatorium, where the 2016 U.S. Olympic Diving Trials will take place.

What's more, Spear has built numerous recreational pools for

cities and community centers, including a facility in Togo, Africa for the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. Just south of the Sahara Desert, Togo is hot and desolate. Spear Corporation, along with a partner company in Texas, built the pool as an oasis and attraction for doctors and their families to the area.

Kristie Spear recognizes that these projects create “memories for a lifetime.”

“I think once (a new pool) is open and we go visit, the kids are out there swimming, then it hits you – this really brings a community together,” she concludes. “Every time, we get emotional when a project's finished and we go take pictures at the ribbon cutting and everyone's so happy. It's very rewarding.”

RESOURCES: Brian Spear, Kristie Spear and John Foley, Spear Corporation, at www.spearcorp.com