

Surviving and Thriving

Longtime Chamber Members Adapt to Changes

By **Symone C. Skrzycki**

Carpe diem: Seize the day!

It's a bold declaration, an anthem for the adventurous.

In the business world, "seizing the day" isn't about the thrill – it's about stepping up your competitive game and boosting your bottom line. Taking risks (entering new markets, making investments, adapting) is paramount to long-term success.

Leaders from four 50-year plus Indiana Chamber member companies – Home News Enterprises; Kennedy Tank & Manufacturing Co., Inc.; Medical Protective; and Rochester Telephone Company – reflect on significant events (and people) that have helped shape their businesses. They also share insights on the state serving as the backdrop for it all.

Kennedy Tank & Manufacturing Co., Indianapolis

Pat Kennedy – president (fourth generation family member to lead company); Founded: 1898; Employees: 200

What we do/milestone achievement

"This is pretty neat. Back in the late 1960s, we developed the first protected underground steel storage tank. The tank was called the STI-P3 (built for storage of gasoline, fuel and other substances) and was designed where the sacrificial anodes (made of either zinc or magnesium) would corrode and the tank would not corrode.

"That was a big milestone. It was very beneficial for the environment.

"Kennedy Tank and my dad and his team quarterbacked it with U.S. Steel and the Steel Tank Institute."

* The Kennedy family of companies is comprised of three operations, located in Indianapolis, Columbia City and Owensboro, Kentucky.

Recent development to move the organization forward

"Probably the most unique thing about us is our diversification. We have several different sets of competitors, but there aren't many companies that do everything we do. We manufacture tanks, we build pressure vessels, we build columns, we build

heat exchangers and then we have the field arm that repairs boilers in industrial plants and utilities, and field erects large diameter tanks at customer sites.

"The products we produce keep getting bigger and heavier, so we've had to upgrade our facilities and our equipment to handle that. Thirty years ago, a 10,000-gallon tank that weighed, let's say, around 15,000 pounds was large. This past summer, we shipped a unit that weighed nearly 400,000 pounds and was over 200 feet long."

Best part of doing business in Indiana

"Fair taxation. A reasonable workers' comp environment. The mentality of working hard. Probably the biggest thing is the people in Indiana.

"There's a lot of industry in Indiana and a lot of good people to pick from who have industrial experience.

"Our business is not an easy business. It's steel fabricating and welding, and it just kind of fits the industriousness of the people in Indiana, I suppose.

"We're looking forward to a bright future for the future generations operating here in Indiana."



Kennedy Tank transports a massive vessel (a distillation column for the purification of polysilicon) to a client in Tennessee.

Home News Enterprises, Columbus

Jeff Brown – CEO (fifth generation family member to lead company); Founded: 1872; Employees: 300-plus

What we do/milestone achievement

“We’ve been fortunate to have really great owners and people who understand what’s required in order to reinvest in a business and keep it going for multiple generations. If you look back 140 years, we’ve had a really good run.

“We currently have four daily newspapers (Columbus, Franklin, Greenfield and Seymour) and two weekly newspapers (Nashville and Pendleton). In addition to that, we do some magazines and we also have a commercial printing division.”



Recent development to move the organization forward

“We purchased the *Seymour Tribune*; that was a recent acquisition this year. It helps us to be more efficient with all of our newspaper properties because we’re able to take advantage of economies of scale.

“The second thing we’ve done is continue to invest in our printing side.”

Best part of doing business in Indiana

“I’ll tell you what – it’s the people here. We have great folks.

“They work hard. They help us create a stable platform for the kinds of products (we create) and how to service our customers. Indiana is a great place to hire people – for our business anyway. And it helps that the state is stable (economically). It makes a big difference.”

Andrew Wingham, pressman for HNE Printing, unloads one job and prepares for the next press run.

Medical Protective (MedPro), Fort Wayne

Tim Kenesey – president and CEO; Founded: 1899; Employees: 500-plus

What we do/milestone achievement

“In 1999, MedPro celebrated its 100-year anniversary. In our industry, many competitors have fallen by the wayside and to be around for double the length of our nearest competitor is a pretty big milestone.

“Medical Protective, since 1899, has been protecting the assets and reputations of health care providers against claims of malpractice. Today, over 100 years later, we’re still based in Fort Wayne, but we have expanded to protecting health care providers countrywide and our customers are all sorts of health care providers. Physicians are where we got our start, but we insure dentists, hospitals, ancillary health care facilities and other health care providers.”

Recent development to move the organization forward

“No doubt, when Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway bought us in 2005, it gave us the additional financial strength, certainty and consistency that our business needs to tackle the challenges of all of the changes in health care delivery. That ownership stability allowed us to really expand even further.”



Throughout its history, Medical Protective has been a leader in the health care malpractice insurance industry.

Best part of doing business in Indiana

“The first thing is we have great employees who are highly skilled and dedicated to our health care providers and our business.

“The second thing is it’s a low-cost environment. The cost of living is lower than what you might see in other areas. The third thing is, I think there’s recognition by governmental entities and agencies that good businesses help make good communities, and that translates into well-paying jobs. It helps everybody.”

Rochester Telephone Company, Rochester

Joe McCarter – president; Founded: 1895; Employees: 34

What we do/milestone achievement

“We started out as a telephone company and have evolved over the last 120 years. We currently are a phone, Internet and cable provider. We serve an exchange that covers a fair amount of Fulton County, and then we also provide wireless Internet (service) that covers the entire county and some of Kosciusko and Miami counties.

“Technology has changed. In the 1980s, the industry embracing IP-based technologies and the Internet, and the acceleration

The 117-year story of Rochester Telephone Company includes this line crew and technicians from the early days.



of the Internet for the next 20 years was certainly something that changed our business dramatically in terms of how we looked at things that needed to be done.”

Recent development to move the organization forward

“We started a “fiber-to-the-home” project (known as FiberConnect), and completed that a year ago (it officially kicked off in April 2003). We now have fiber-to-the-home throughout our entire exchange.

“It allowed us the opportunity to provide higher bandwidth capacity and quality of service to our customers and to migrate away from our copper plant – and through fiber – be able to address the future needs of businesses and residents throughout our exchange.”

Best part of doing business in Indiana

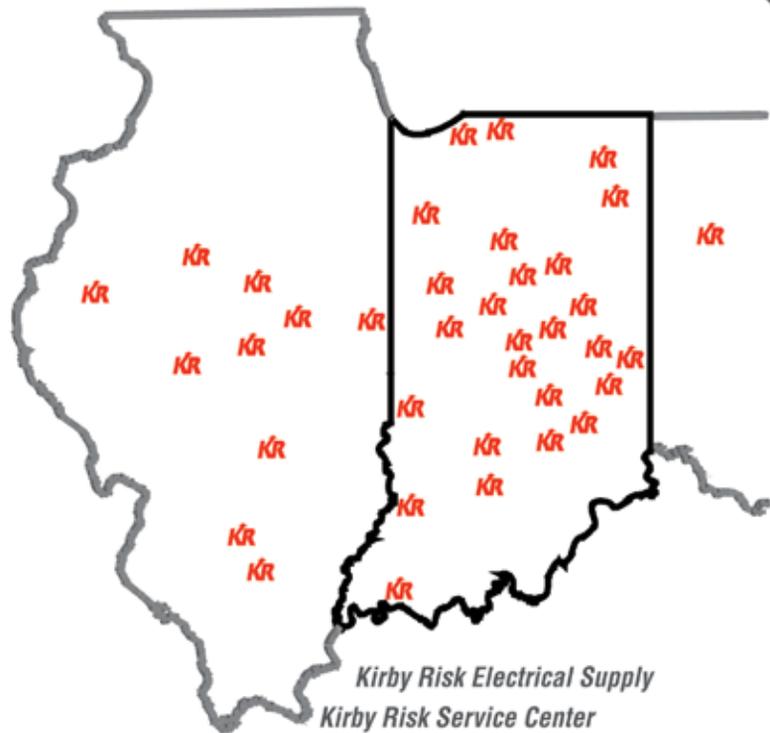
“Quite honestly, the people you get to work with and the culture in Indiana. It’s the way people conduct themselves and everyday transactions in terms of how they deal with other people.”



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