



Members of the Deister family examine an ore concentrating table.

DEISTER MACHINE COMPANY

Leaving a Legacy

Address: P.O. Box 1, Fort Wayne, IN 46801
Management: Irwin F. Deister, Jr., chairman, and E. Mark Deister, president
Telephone: (260) 426-7495
Web Site: www.deistermachine.com

By **Symone C. Skrzycki**

One can't help but smile during a chat with the Deister cousins.

Irwin (age 88) and Mark (79) are witty. They're generous. They're passionate.

And they're not slowing down.



Irwin (left) and Mark Deister credit employees as keys to the company's enduring success.



of shareholders. We are the shareholders. We are the board of directors. So, we have complete flexibility in decision-making and our decision-making can be made immediately."

Mark jumps in, obviously touched by the story he's about to tell.

"We're also fiercely loyal to our customers and our employees. About six weeks ago, we had (nearly 40 customers) come in. They were here three days. They said, 'We know Deister has the best equipment in the world. And we know Deister has the best service in the world. But now that we've toured your plants and met all of your people, you also have the best employees in the world!' And they'd all love to work for Deister Machine Company. That speaks volumes. They don't just buy because of Irv and I – they buy because of the whole team."

Deister provides feeding, scalping and screening equipment to the aggregate and mining industry. It's used in all 50 states, Canada, Mexico and several international countries. There are six locations (all in Fort Wayne) and more than 270 employees, the highest number in the history of the company.

German immigrant Emil Deister, Irwin's and Mark's grandfather, founded the business in 1912.

"We have remained a family-owned company all that time," Irwin remarks. "We have – and this would also apply to our (workplace) culture – operated with honesty and integrity. Our word is good. When we say we're going to do something, we do it."

Irwin and Mark each own 50% of the business.

"We can do many things from a warranty standpoint and a service standpoint, and absorb the costs because the buck stops with the Deisters," Irwin says proudly. "We're not responsible to a bunch

Close connections

At Deister, business is personal.

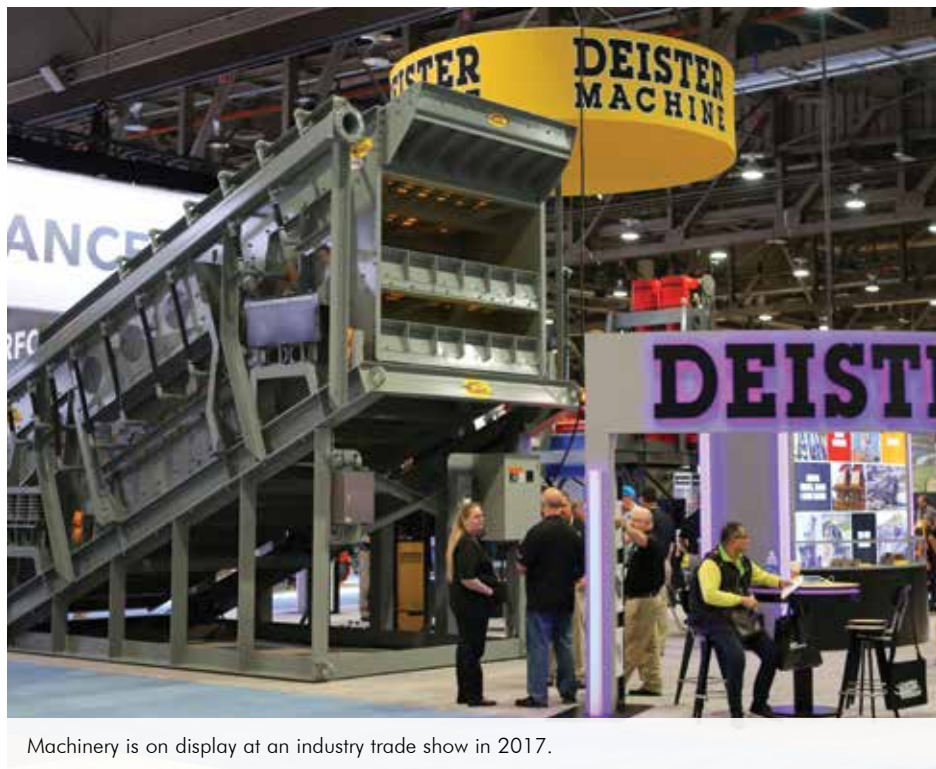
“Our being a family-owned company has proved to be a great advantage for us in the marketplace,” Irwin explains. “Most of our competitors today are foreign owned. And being foreign owned, they also have a flock of shareholders. The customers that are served by our competitors never know the person or personnel with whom they’re dealing. And to get something done, you end up having to deal with your owner in London or (wherever it may be).”

Things couldn’t be more different at Deister.

“You can’t buy a piece of our equipment over a computer. Generally, it takes personal contact with Deister people or Deister representatives or agents. People know with whom they are dealing and it’s remained Deisters. Our people in our key positions are still relatively young, but they’ve been here a long time. There’s not this constant rollover of people that our customers have to deal with.”

Going strong

Adapting to changing technology is



Machinery is on display at an industry trade show in 2017.

Brotherhood Mutual: Planning for the Next 100 Years

By Charlee Beasor

How else would an organization that has made philanthropy part of its core mission celebrate 100 years in the insurance industry? Give back to others, of course.

In honor of its centennial anniversary, Fort Wayne-based Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company donated \$1 million to form a non-profit organization – Full Strength – that supports pastors and missionaries.

The company also treated employees and families to a concert by Grammy-nominated band NEEDTOBREATHE and held a special summit for agents.

Celebrating a momentous business anniversary in such a way is one more avenue for the organization, which writes policies for churches and ministries across the country, to honor its mission of “advancing the kingdom by serving the church.”

Brotherhood Mutual has been ranked in the Best Places to Work in Indiana program for 10 consecutive years. BizVoice® has reported previously on some other ways the company lives out its mission:

- Chapel services held in the on-site chapel are organized and led by employees
- Ministry support helps cover the cost of short-term mission trips for employees and family members
- Creating a 600-meter outdoor walking path with walking meetings encouraged, even during the winter when maintenance crews clear the path
- An internal Toastmasters chapter that allows employees to work on public speaking and gain more confidence
- Paying for employees to continue their education and professional development through a partnership with Taylor University
- Guaranteeing employment to all employees’ college-age children for a period of six to 12 weeks
- Providing benefits for employees who are adopting children



Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company celebrates its 100th anniversary by creating a non-profit with philanthropic efforts in the pastoral community and for its employees.

internationally and domestically (this benefit was added in direct response to employee feedback)

Chairman and President Mark Robison was quoted in a previous BizVoice story on the company’s values: “I encourage my team to dream bigger than the status quo. Leaders have to be willing to entertain uncommon ideas, and then, together, build a plan that will bring those ideas to life.

“Leaders have to be willing to hire people who can help them move the needle toward the vision, and they need to be sure to treat their people well. It’s a very simple idea, but ‘do unto others as you would have done unto you’ has proven a very successful approach for our company.”

Brotherhood Mutual has been a member of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce since 1980.

RESOURCE: Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company at www.brotherhoodmutual.com



Despite major flooding in 2008 that closed Columbus Regional Hospital for several months, the organization kept everyone employed with pay through the clean-up efforts. A yearlong project encourages employees to celebrate 100 years in service through volunteerism.

Columbus Regional Health: Surviving and Thriving

By Charlee Beasor

It's difficult to look back at the 100 years Columbus Regional Health (CRH) has been serving its community without pointing to that "once in 500 years" flood in 2008 as a defining moment.

And CRH officials can't recall that harrowing time ("within 45 minutes, the entire basement was filled to the ceiling with water ...") without highlighting the incredible teamwork among the hospital's employees and their steadfast support of a community devastated by floodwaters.

The flood caused over \$180 million in damages and prompted the evacuation of 157 patients, according to the hospital's web site.

The May-June 2009 issue of *BizVoice*® (view the story at www.bizvoicemagazine.com) included a full account of the flood and recovery efforts (including that quote above from CRH President and CEO Jim Bickel).

One of the highlights of that article is that Bickel and company executives ensured the hospital would retain all employees (around 1,800 at the time) with pay while the building was out of commission.

It was a risky decision – as no one knew how long it would take for the hospital to reopen. Bickel contributed a guest column to *BizVoice* magazine in 2014 as part of the coverage of the Best Places to Work in Indiana program:

"This was the hardest, yet at the same time the easiest leadership decision I ever made. It was easy because it aligned with our commitment to value our workforce. It was hard because of the great uncertainty of the flood's long-term impact. Thanks to the hard work, commitment and tenacity of our workforce, we reopened after five months despite projections it might take over a year before the facility was ready for our patients."

CRH has been ranked as a Best Place to Work in Indiana seven times. In 2006, it came in at No. 4 in the large company category (the list was divided between only small/medium and large companies at the time; it now participates in the "major" category).

Some employee benefits highlighted at the time of that 2006 writing included subsidized child care, comprehensive employee assistance program, paid time off donation program for co-workers in need, corporate wellness program and a bear hug tree in which employees could receive anonymous financial assistance during the holidays.

Almost 10 years post-flood, CRH continues to look to the future. More than 2,100 employees at the 225-bed hospital are providing services to a 10-county region in southeastern Indiana.

The 100th anniversary of the organization was February 6, 2017. CRH continued its commitment to the community it serves by kicking off a yearlong project, "100 Years, 100 Ways of Giving Back," which encourages employees to celebrate the anniversary through volunteerism. A comprehensive look at the history of CRH is available on the company's web site.

RESOURCE: Columbus Regional Health at www.crh.org

crucial. It's one reason the Deisters aren't afraid to invest in ways to modernize.

"Irv and I have both spent millions on new CNC (computer numerical control) equipment," Mark recounts. "I understand we have the largest brake press in Indiana. ... And in our IT equipment, we have state-of-the-art technology (including) what we do with our computerization process.

"We're not at all looking at the short term. We're looking at the long term. The key to all of these advancements is to keep the cost of the equipment down and have state-of-the-art (technology) for accuracy and dependability."

There's also an emphasis on durability and (a recurring theme) integrity.

"When you have this very abrasive sand or silicon or granite or marble – all of this stuff is extremely hard on equipment," Irwin observes. "One of our precepts is that we build equipment to last as long as possible. You can say, 'Deister, you're foolish. Why build your equipment so good that you can't replace it quickly?' And that brings up a point: I can't give you the exact percentage of our business that's done as repeat business with the same customers, but I'll guarantee you it's over 50%."

Driven by faith

Deister keeps Christian values front and center.

"We feel that the Lord has blessed us," Irwin reveals. "We call upon him for guidance at all of our meetings. Yes, we're Christian oriented, but that doesn't mean that our customers are only Christians."

For the past 15 years, the organization has enlisted the services of a corporate chaplain.

"Rick Cockman is just amazing," Mark declares. "He has an article in our newsletter every other month. He sees every employee in all six operations every single week. He also goes to the hospital with our employees and their mates and to the funeral homes."

Irwin adds, "And above all, he does not report to us. Anything he hears – and it's not business at all – he never reports anything to us."

Looking ahead

Following in Irwin's and Mark's footsteps are Richard M. Deister (Rich is Mark's son and executive vice president) and Max Deister (Rich's son, who joined the team this summer).

"We want it to remain the Deister Machine Company and solely owned," Irwin relates. "What's really exciting is that we don't have to look at Rich as the end of the



Founder Emil Deister (far left) in 1912. Deister’s centennial gala in 2012 featured food, ice sculptures and a legacy of pride.

Deister line. We now have his son Max in the company. You think of the fifth generation of a family-owned company; there aren’t many of those left today.”

Irwin cracks a joke when asked about what interests him outside the office.

“I’m interested in getting up in the morning! I’m 88 years old. I’m in pretty good health. I have a lot of sick days built up, so I spend

considerable time in Florida. I like to play golf. I’m in the office every day I’m here (in Indiana).”

Reflecting on what’s next, he has this to say: “We never rest on our laurels. Every day, we continue to pursue avenues to better ourselves and better our product, better our service. It’s a continuing project of ours to continue to better ourselves and to never sit back and say, ‘We’re there. We’ll just stay where we are and not proceed forward.’”

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