



Going Green
— inside

Midlands Business Journal

Founded 1975

“Any government big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take all you’ve got.”

JUNE 19, 2015

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER OF GREATER OMAHA, LINCOLN AND COUNCIL BLUFFS

\$2.00

VOL. 41 NO. 25

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Area businesses support mission and efforts of Omaha Gives event.

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Varas works to find opportunities for students at Avenue Scholars.

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Volume of condo buyers results in

Western Specialty Contractors targets technology tools

by Richard D. Brown

Western Specialty Contractors — formerly Western Waterproofing — has invested heavily in new technology tools in order to better manage each job. This is part of the firm’s rebranding and aim to significantly increase its client base in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa.

Omaha Branch Manager Dave Richard, who oversees a local operation that has grown from 25 to 35 employees in the past two years and racks up annual revenues of \$3.5 million, said the rebranding of the St. Louis-based firm is part of a centennial celebration that is targeted toward the company’s aim to gain a wider variety of projects.

“We’ve become one of the nation’s largest specialty contractors in masonry, concrete and façade restoration, specialty roofing and historic preservation in addition to waterproofing work,” Richard said.

Richard, a 22-year veteran of the construction industry and the firm’s Omaha manager since 2011, said the in-house joke is that “we’re

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Omaha Branch Manager Dave Richard at a masonry restoration project at 127th and Dodge ... Firm expands service offerings and reach with new software.

(Photo by MJB / Becky McCarville)

Midwest Medical Transport eyeing expansion plans in Nebraska, Iowa

by Michelle Leach

What started as a one-ambulance business in 1987 has grown

“There is a big misconception in the industry that the cost of air service has greatly increased over



Western Specialty Contractors targets technology tools

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the guys who do the oddball stuff.”

“What we’ve evolved into is a company than can take care of a building from its roof on down to below grade,” he said. “We’re working with a consultant to evaluate where we are and then to come out with a concerted plan to get our message out to new clients.”

Revenues at the Omaha branch are almost evenly divided between concrete restoration, brick restoration and miscellaneous projects. The company with more than 900 field personnel nationally is embarking on specialized marketing targeting industries and their specific needs.

Longtime clients include ConAgra, the University of Nebraska system, Boys Town,

the city of Omaha, America First Property Management, NAI FMA Realty in Lincoln, among others.

A recent project at the former Skinner Macaroni Building at 14th and Jackson streets involved an inordinate amount of replacement of structural steel lintels used to angle bricks around the historic building’s windows. A project for Ag Processing Inc. required the removal of limestone capstones from walls. Expertise from Western Specialty Contractor’s Minneapolis office enabled the Omaha branch to submit a more targeted bid because the process to be used was clearly outlined.

About 95 percent of the work of the Omaha office is negotiated.

“A \$1.2 million contract would equal a big

job for us here,” Richard said. “Our average is in the \$50,000 to \$75,000 range.”

Western Specialty Contractors has invested about \$3.5 million in ViewPoint mobile field management software for use at each of its 30 branches. Personnel use an iPad to fill in change orders, shoot pictures of troublesome spots for architects to appraise and take regular assessments of the costs of a project compared to the estimate determined earlier.

“Our field workers can have an answer in 30 minutes by using this technology,” Richard said. “They may get a call within 30 minutes from one of our engineers who has viewed a picture or evaluated data submitted — this is compared to up to a week that formerly could be necessary in order to get an answer

to a question.”

Richard said close attention is paid to helping workers do assignments — which often can involve intricate and precise work — and appropriate tools are introduced and

Western Specialty Contractors

Phone: 402-333-3647

Address: 14515 Grover St, Suite 100, Omaha 68144

Services: building restoration and preservation, concrete and masonry

Founded: 1915 by George Bishop of St. Louis; Omaha branch opened in 1955.

Employees: 35

One-year goal: Increase client base in Omaha area.

Website: www.westernspecialtycontractors.com

Midwest Medical Transport eyeing expansion plans in Nebraska, Iowa

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provider in Nebraska, so our patients enjoy the benefit of not seeing a large balance bill after they are flown.”

Kim and Jill Wolfe started the business 28 years ago, initially as a “stand-by” ambulance services firm available at community events and high school football games.

Operations were reportedly ran from their garage until 2000, when the Columbus station (now company headquarters) was built.

Today the company boasts 14 other stations: Auburn, Bellevue, Council Bluffs, Elkhorn, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lexington, Lincoln, Missouri Valley, Neligh, North Platte and Omaha.

Its 50 ambulances are joined by about 100 vehicles (including para-transit wheelchair vans and support vehicles) and two medical

its start in 2010 in North Platte, with service added to Hastings four years later.

He referenced growth in air service in eastern Nebraska, as well as in Iowa with ground stations; to the former, DeLancey noted the expansion will occur “in the near future at the request of area hospitals.”

Its momentum is represented by a number of the aforementioned stations.

To better service the metro, DeLancey said it expanded and restructured from three to four stations to “provide better coverage across the entire metro area.”

“Our stations now include the main Omaha station on 84th and Grover as well as satellite stations in Bellevue, Elkhorn and Council Bluffs,” he said, adding that the Council Bluffs station is its newest location, having opened in the past two months as part of the Omaha expansion.

Missouri Valley, Kearney and Auburn have all been added in the past two years.

Around four months after joining Midwest Medical Transport Co. as an EMT in May 2013, DeLancey transitioned to business development manager and was promoted to his present director position in March of this year.

“Before joining Midwest I attended the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (BS in Biology), worked at Bryan Health in Lincoln and earned my EMT license as a medic in the Nebraska National Guard,” he said, adding he has “been in the Military for 13 years with a tour in Iraq and another in Afghanistan.”

DeLancey said the company is continuously hiring paramedics, EMTs and generally for additional employees on both a part- and full-time basis.

Reluctant managers have to learn to lead, take on new roles

by Ann Belser

Taking on a leadership position is stressful. It’s more stressful than raising teenagers, getting married or even getting a divorce. “It’s

felt like I didn’t have a choice.”

Another 20 percent were happier, saying,



Midwest Medical Transport Co.-Midwest MedAir

Phone: 402-563-3396

Address: 2155 33rd Ave., Columbus 68601(headquarters); 3434 S. 84th St., Omaha 68124

Services: ground ambulance, air ambulance