

Diversification key at R Braun Inc.

BY MARK SHERRY

R Braun Inc. may be the poster child for diversified companies.

From manufacturing manure application equipment to providing a variety of services for farmers, selling powersports equipment, renting other equipment and doing or selling what seems like countless other things, the St. Nazianz-based company does it.

Diversification keeps a company from having all its eggs in one basket. R Braun Inc. has lots of baskets and lots of eggs—not literally, of course.

The company traces its roots back to 1964 and a business known as Modern Plumbing, Electrical, and Heating Inc. Richard and Joyce Braun operated the business from their home located just outside St. Nazianz. When the focus became electrical contracting, the name was changed to Braun Electric Inc. Before long their services were extended to all aspects of farm service and throughout the years the company has expanded to meet the ever demanding and changing needs of their customers.

CURRENT OWNERS PURCHASED IN 2003

Rick Braun purchased the company from Richard and Joyce in 2003. The company continues to strive to be on the cutting edge of technology while continuing to offer the top quality of products, installation and services that formed the foundation of the business.

Alecia Braun, talent coordinator for the company, said the company's manufacturing department has been steadily growing. R Braun Inc. primarily manufactures manure application equipment such as large hose carts, dribble bars, pump units, hose movers and more. The company's equipment is sold to dealers in Wisconsin and other states including New York, Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota, as well as into Canada. Equipment sales also take place direct to manure application businesses, and R Braun Inc. also fulfills custom orders.

Alecia said recently that the company is selling equipment faster than they can produce it. She said they are actively seeking to hire more welders, fabricators and CNC operators to keep up with growth.

Services offered by R Braun Inc. include excavation (including pond digging and solids removal with its 70-foot long reach excavator), hydro-excavation, nutrient management systems, custom manure application and ventilation/sprinkler systems for dairy barns.

WORK WITHIN AN HOUR OF ST. NAZIANZ

The company serves dairy farmers primarily within a 60-mile radius of St. Nazianz by selling multiple products produced by other companies. These include cow waterers, alley scrapers, cow mats, generators, feeding systems, lagoon covers and more.

Alecia said R Braun Inc. has upwards of 12 service crews which do the construction, installation and service work for all these products for the company's agricultural cus-



Powersports salesman Rob Voss (above) and small engine repair technician Cory Feldmann (right) are just two of the many employees who make R Braun Inc. successful.

tomers. The company as a whole currently employees 65 people.

In the powersports category, R Braun Inc. sells Spartan mowers, Intimidator utility vehicles, Envy "neighborhood" vehicles all manufactured in Batesville, Arkansas and a full line of Toro products including gas and electric-powered snow blowers and more. The company's growth in the powersports area has led to it adding Cory Feldmann to its team as a full-time small engine repair technician. Feldmann brings 25 years of experience in that area to the R Braun Inc. team, including working with Stihl and Polaris products. R Braun Inc. carries the full line of Stihl products including both gas and electric chain saws, trimmers and much more.

St. Nazianz area residents love the fact that they have a Hardware Hank hardware store in their small village, located in the R Braun Inc. building at 209 N. 4th Ave. (CTH A). Braun's hardware offerings include a large section of Milwaukee tools, Husqvarna accessories, and rental equipment including scissors lifts, skid steers, manure spreaders, pumps, lawn sweepers, lawn rollers, snow blowers and lawn and garden equipment.

No matter what the product or service a person is looking for at R Braun Inc., the company has the same motto: "All you have to do is ask!"

R Braun Inc. is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to noon. Check out its website at rbrauninc.com for more information on all the things this diversified company can do.



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