

May 2021

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ANNIVERSARY
1926-2021

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A publication for and about Road Machinery & Supplies Co. customers

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Jessica Robbins,
Executive Vice
President

David Silverstein,
Owner

Scrap Processors Inc.

Iowa scrap metal recycling firm spurs four generations of operation



SCRAP PROCESSORS INC.

Des Moines, Iowa, area scrap metal recycling firm uses family atmosphere to spur four generations of operation



*David Silverstein,
Owner*



*Jessica Robbins,
Executive Vice
President*

Rarely do generational companies resemble their original business plans. Most take winding journeys until they find their niche. Des Moines, Iowa-based Scrap Processors Inc. (SPI) is no different.

“When my grandfather, Myer Silverstein, started the business in 1948, they did a bunch of everything,” said Owner David Silverstein. “They handled furs and car parts – we had three auto parts stores. Scrap metal was always a part of it. Fortunately, they got away from the other stuff and focused on scrap metal recycling.”

Four generations and 73 years later, that decision seems to be the correct one. The company expanded from its birthplace in Webster City, Iowa to open a new location in Des Moines in 1985, when Myer and his son, Ben, purchased a scrap yard. David came on board in 1990 after graduating from West Virginia University. David’s niece, Executive

Vice President Jessica Robbins, joined the operation when she moved to Iowa from Maryland in 2013.

“I grew up in this company, working summers,” recalled David.

“It’s cool to see something your family has built over time continue to thrive,” Jessica stated.

Today, SPI has 19 employees with three locations in Iowa – two in Des Moines and one in Webster City. The company focuses on ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metal. The second Des Moines location specializes in demanufacturing appliances.

Recipe for success

Success and longevity require growth to survive, and SPI has achieved both since David took over the company in 2009, after his father’s retirement.

“When I took over for my dad, I knew there was opportunity for growth,” said David. “He was a little stuck in his ways, but he was successful. Still, I thought I could make some changes to help the company continue to grow and expand.”

Those changes included upgrading equipment and moving one of its Des Moines facilities to a larger location. While those decisions have driven growth, it’s what didn’t change that has kept the company successful.

“We are a family business and having that family feel is important to our success,” said David. “We have employees who have been here longer than me. So, even though we’ve grown, we still treat everyone like they are family. You have to treat your employees right, and it’s more than pay. I think companies can forget that sometimes.”

That approach extends to SPI’s customers as well.



Using a Komatsu PC390LC with a Genesis GXT mobile shear attachment, a Scrap Processors Inc. operator cuts a piece of sheet metal.



Scrap Processors Inc. (SPI) opened a new, 10-acre facility in Des Moines, Iowa in 2020. SPI uses SENNEBOGEN 825 and 835E material handlers in addition to Komatsu PC210LC and PC390LC excavators to process material at the yard.

“One thing my great-grandfather, Myer, was adamant about was customer service,” added Jessica. “He wanted to treat each customer like family. I think the way we work with customers is what sets us apart from the competition. We really want to build relationships, and because of that, we have people who have been coming to us since before I was born.”

Preparing for growth

In June of 2020, SPI moved into a new 10-acre location in Des Moines, Iowa. The new facility provided a significant upgrade in space over its existing 2-acre Des Moines site. While David has plenty of ideas for how to utilize the location, he says implementing them will be a slow process.

“It’s kind of like when you move into a new house; it takes you some time to realize which room is for what and where things should go,” he joked. “Some ideas we had have already changed, so we’re slowly settling into this place.”

One of the immediate changes the new facility brought was a makeover of SPI’s equipment fleet.

“We have a hard surface, so we needed machines that were suited for that – excavator tracks are not great for concrete,” noted David. “When we started the process of building this new facility, we knew we were going to need different equipment, so we started looking around. Jessica and I went to multiple scrap conventions, and we were able



At Scrap Processors Inc.’s new Des Moines, Iowa location, an operator uses a SENNEBOGEN 825 with a magnet attachment to separate a pile of scrap metal.

to meet with SENNEBOGEN and get a good feel of their machines.”

Even though the new facility was not yet open, SPI purchased a SENNEBOGEN material handler and put it into action at its existing site.

“It was a completely different type of surface – old dirt and mud – which the machine isn’t really designed for, but we knew we would be moving,” said David. “The crews ran it and liked it. However, as we got more used to it, we knew we were going to need something bigger at the new facility, so we purchased an 835E and had it delivered to the new site. Using the 825 made our decision much easier on going with an 835E,” he added.



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The right fit

While the size and rubber tires are an ideal fit for the new facility, the SENNEBOGEN material handlers also provide several other benefits for SPI.

“We can get from one side of the facility to the other much quicker with the wheeled material handlers, which is important in a larger facility,” explained David. “We also have more reach with the material handler as well. We have grapple and magnet attachments that allow us to load and unload trucks a lot faster. We can sort loads as they come in.”



Scrap Processors Inc.'s third-generation Owner David Silverstein (right) meets with Road Machinery & Supplies Co. Territory Manager Bob Newman in Des Moines, Iowa. “We have a great relationship with Bob that goes back to when my father was here,” said Silverstein. “My grandfather even purchased equipment from Herman M. Brown Co. My family has had a relationship with RMS for more than 50 years.”



A Scrap Processors Inc. operator uses a SENNEBOGEN 835E material handler to load a shipping container with aluminum at its Des Moines, Iowa yard.

The SENNEBOGEN's raised cabs are also beneficial features. Operators can raise the cab to gain a better vantage point, and the cab tilts as it raises to provide better visibility.

“We've tried to put aftermarket cabs on excavators in the past, but they aren't the same,” noted David. “In the SENNEBOGENs, the operator can look down into a load and pick his spots and load or unload without wasting time or damaging trailers. When you're loading 15-20 trucks a day, that helps operators get it done quicker, which increases our efficiency.”

Overall, the SENNEBOGENs have proven themselves.

“I'm very happy with the 825 and 835E,” said David. “They are a great fit for what we're doing. They run all day and keep us moving.”

“I love the SENNEBOGENs,” exclaimed Jessica. “We can do our jobs more efficiently with the SENNEBOGENs than we can with traditional excavators.”

Sticking with RMS

Fortunately for David, when he added SENNEBOGEN material handlers to the fleet, he didn't also have to add a new equipment distributor. He was able to turn to longtime Territory Manager Bob Newman and Road Machinery & Supplies Co.

“There are other machines out there we could have gone with, but our relationship with Bob steered us to SENNEBOGEN,” said David. “We have a great relationship with Bob that goes back to when my father was here. My grandfather even purchased equipment from Herman M. Brown Co. My family has had a relationship with RMS for more than 50 years.”

While the material handlers have added a new dimension to SPI's yard, Komatsu still has a presence.

“We just purchased a PC210LC excavator and put rubber tracks on it so we can move it safely around the new yard,” stated David. “We still need excavators to run the shear attachment and to operate at our facilities with dirt yards, so Komatsu excavators are still present.”

SPI uses a Komatsu PC390LC excavator with a Genesis GXT mobile shear attachment to manage material piles. Both were purchased from and serviced by RMS.

“We trust Bob,” said David. “He has been great for us, and we really appreciate all he does. That's the biggest reason we continue to go with RMS.” 