

Current Mechanical's energy-efficient ice bank at Huntington North High School in Indiana.

CURRENT MECHANICAL

Influencing clients and the community with green solutions

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF CURRENT MECHANICAL, being green needs to make sense, not only financially, but also in their personal lives, so their children and grandchildren will have better futures. "We want to have an impact on what we can do to help save the environment," says Pete Smith, LEED AP and the company's vice president of service. "We also hope that what we do through our business gets through to our clients' and employees' personal lives as well. If a HVACR service-contracting company can be green and can do all of these things, then why can't we all do it in our own homes—from lighting to recycling to energy efficiency?"

Founded more than 31 years ago in Fort Wayne, Indiana, by Robert Current and now led by second-generation president Tom Current, Current Mechanical is an

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
FORT WAYNE, IN

AREA OF
SPECIALTY:
HVACR SERVICE/
MECHANICAL
CONTRACTOR

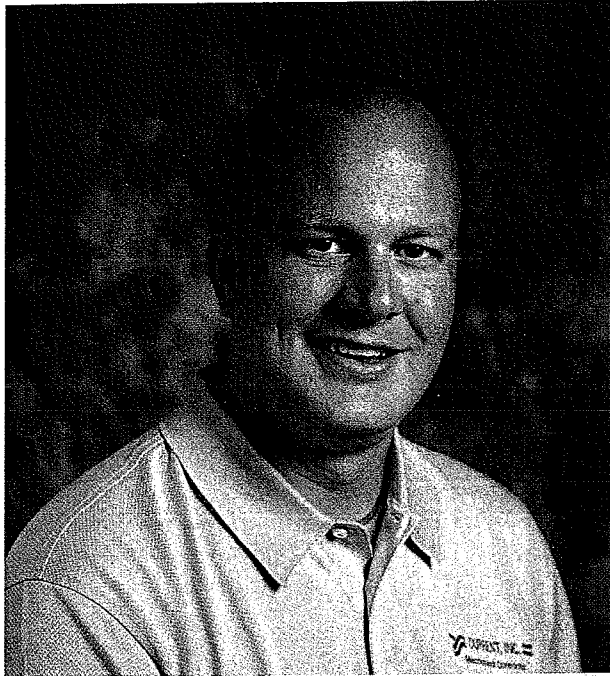
AVERAGE ANNUAL
SALES:
\$18 MILLION

EMPLOYEES:
80

HVACR contractor that services northeastern Indiana. As a HVACR/mechanical-contracting company, Current Mechanical offers 24-hour service on air-conditioning, heating, plumbing, and refrigeration every day of the year. It also offers clients green solutions to help their businesses become more familiar with the green movement and educates them on how that can financially impact their business. "Being green can provide benefits to our existing and potential client base," Smith says. "And by being on the leading edge of the green movement, it gives us a competitive advantage over our competitors, as well."

But that's not the only reason why Current Mechanical embraced the green movement. "We want to be a positive influence in our own community as it relates to being green, and if we can be seen as a company that embraces the green movement, that in and of itself will give us more opportunities for our business," Smith says.

The first step the company took in becoming a green-friendly firm was to investigate green building and how to reduce its carbon footprint. "When we renovated the former Falstaff Brewery Brownfield for our new headquarters seven years ago, we installed a geothermal heat-pump loop and installed high-efficiency lighting," Smith explains. "Then we took it a step further and hired an outside firm to come in and help craft a green philosophy for us. Viridian Architectural and Design educated



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—Pete Smith, Vice President of Service

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High-efficiency boilers installed at Sweetwater Sound.

[our] employees about recycling, using green products, using eco-friendly signage, and green education—they discussed every little action that we can do to be green.”

The goal of that, according to Smith, was for the employees to take that same mentality home and promote the green thought within their own personal lives. “That’s why we created a green philosophy internally,” Smith says. “We then went ahead and trained all of our employees [in regards to] the green policy and what the expectations were. The entire organization has truly embraced our green movement. It’s not just lip service. This is something that we practice every day.”

Taking these practices into account, on job sites, the company discusses with clients how it could handle construction waste and gives them ideas about utilizing energy efficiency for their buildings. One example would be Sweetwater Sound, the fourth-largest music-instrument and pro-audio retailer in the world. Current Mechanical completed Sweetwater’s new headquarters in January 2008. It was the first commercial structure in northeast Indiana to receive LEED Platinum certification. It features a 250-seat state-of-the-art auditorium/performance theater, three new recording studios, and a 2,000-square-foot multiroom home for Sweetwater’s new Academy of Music and Technology. Current Mechanical installed the energy-efficient mechanical and HVAC systems for the building.

As he looks ahead to the company’s future, Smith wants to continue to grow its existing green business. “We also want to continue growing our service business while incorporating green initiatives,” he says. The company’s future plans also include expansion into the residential and fire-protection markets. “We want to expand our service offerings,” Smith says, “as we can provide the lifelong benefits of partnering with our clients beyond the relatively short construction cycle.” GBQ