



# BEHLEN update

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## Greeting from Sean Lepper, Vice-President and General Manager at BEHLEN

As we celebrate our 45th anniversary at BEHLEN we are pleased to announce some very exciting news that promises more opportunities to come. Through our partner, NWS Construction, we've received the largest job in our history, which involves manufacturing 31 buildings for a Shell Canada heavy oil development in Carmon Creek, Alberta. We expect we'll start work on this huge project very soon which will give us solid work for about two years, even during the months when we're typically slow.

Also coming up, we will witness the opening of two large sports facilities that were manufactured in our plant. One was erected in Winnipeg and the other sent across the world. Both will be heavily used and will showcase how attractive and versatile our buildings can be.

We are getting closer to starting robotic welding in our factory. We've been talking about this for a long time, and we look forward to getting the system up and running in advance of the huge amount of work we'll be completing for the Carmon Creek project for Shell. Training of welders and programming staff is underway and we expect to have the system arrive in November. That will be a very exciting time as we learn to use cutting edge technology.

As a management team we want to thank everyone for being so willing to accept the changes we've implemented over the last months. We know we are moving toward a better, more efficient way of doing things that will benefit us all. BEHLEN is where it is today because of your enthusiasm and support.

Sean



## PROFILE:

# Rebecca Cunningham

### *New software modernizing detailer's job at BEHLEN*

Rebecca Cunningham's role at BEHLEN is going from 2D to 3D as part of a technology change that will reach into every department. BEHLEN is bringing in new software that will do away with repetitive tasks and make everything from ordering a building to manufacturing it more efficient.



Rebecca is a detailer at the new WGI-owned facility in Cambridge that houses divisions of BEHLEN, Canada Culvert, Meridian and more. She's worked at BEHLEN since 2013 and her job includes translating building orders and the engineer's design into step-by-step plans that the shop can create.

"As a detailer, I treat the shop like my customer," said Rebecca. "I try to eliminate all confusion and make the shop drawings and building plans as clear as possible. My job is to make sure that the shop has all the information that they need to manufacture the building."

There are big changes coming into the detailing and manufacturing process that will drastically change Rebecca's role in the next months. BEHLEN is implementing new software called Advance Steel. The new technology will allow BEHLEN's engineers to transfer the design information that they have input into MBS and generate an electronic model of a building that is imported directly into Advance Steel. Rebecca will be able to work with the electronic model that has much of the information she needs already built into it.

A big part of Rebecca's job is laying out each building and making sure it will fit together on site. The new system will make that process easier.

"The new software will allow me to see everything in 3D and detect clashes so I'll be able to tell easily if there's a conflict," said Rebecca. "The list of parts that needs to be sent to the construction site can

be created directly from the model of the building. Right now we create that list by hand. Once we're past the learning curve, this software will make our process much more efficient."

*"I find my job very fascinating. I like to see how everything comes together," she said. "I enjoy figuring out the best way to put certain details together if there's not a standard way to do things."*

As a detailer, she is one of the last people to see the shop drawings and packing lists before the buildings are manufactured.

"There are so many different people that have a part in designing and making decisions about the building before it comes to me," said Rebecca. "I have to make sure that the shop has all the information they need to create the building. That can sometimes mean confirming and tracking down information."

She enjoys solving tricky problems and coming up with a simple way to conquer a complex issue.



# BEHLEN's Engineering Department Supporting Robotic

*A note from Pat Versavel, Vice President Engineering and Innovation at BEHLEN*

Exciting changes are coming to BEHLEN's engineering department in the form of an automated system to complete some of the repetitive work needed to create a Rigid Frame building. The department is modernizing the facility to allow some of the welding to be completed by robots instead of by hand. The change will free staff for more complex jobs, allowing BEHLEN to keep additional work in-house, diversify its offering and become more competitive.

"As a department this will involve lots of new and interesting work for our employees," said Pat Versavel, Vice President Engineering and Innovation at BEHLEN. "With this technology, BEHLEN will be at the forefront of our industry. We're excited to give our staff access to the latest and greatest tools and to teach them things they wouldn't get the chance to learn anywhere else."

The robotic welding system will be used to reduce man-hours on creating a variety of parts including three plate welded frames – a crucial component in Rigid Frame buildings. Software called Advanced Steel will make a three-dimensional electronic model of the structure – mapping out the size and shape of the parts and allowing the robotic system to recreate them exactly.

"Automatizing our simple welding jobs will make

us more efficient because we will be able to take away some of the monotonous work involved in doing it manually," said Pat. "We hope to have the new system in place in a few months."

To put the project into perspective, Pat explained that there are about 60 three plate welded frame assemblies in an average Rigid Frame hockey rink. The robotic welding system will have the capacity to do about 50 per cent of the work in about 30 per cent of the time, saving approximately 600 man-hours. Those hours will be spent keeping work in-house, completing other welding projects for BEHLEN's sister companies, and diversifying into new markets.

"Our first priority is of course our own work," said Pat. "But this technology will open the door to the possibility of taking on other welding projects and doing them very efficiently."

The new software will also support the Metal Fabrication department, which is upgrading its press break: a machine used to bend and crease steel. The upgraded system will replace the machine's controller making it easier to set up while becoming more accurate and more efficient. It will also allow the machine to do some of the work automatically, reduce handling time and improve operator safety.



*"It's not just about doing it faster, it's about doing it with less effort and less risk."*

# What's New at BEHLEN

*Terri Norman of BEHLEN Industries, visited Ghana this summer for two weeks to help build a new school for local children. Along with a group of local Girl Guides volunteers, she helped mix concrete by hand and construct building blocks to pour the floor and start on the walls of the structure. Great job Terri!*



*Some events to look out for this holiday season will be the BEHLEN/Westman Christmas Party which will be held at Brandon's Victoria Inn Hotel on December 13th. As well, BEHLEN will also host a Kids Christmas Party at the Brandon YMCA on December 7th.*

## BEHLEN Celebrates 45th Birthday in Brandon

The air was brisk and the sun was shining as the grills fired up, and all employees were welcome to eat their fill of hamburgers, hotdogs, and a very special Behlen cake. But what was the occasion?

As you may know, BEHLEN Industries LP has been a staple in the Brandon community since before many of the employees can remember. In fact, Behlen surpassed the 45-year mark in September, which was cause for festivities.

Behlen has been operating as one of the largest employers in Southwestern Manitoba for nearly half-a-century, currently employing around 300 salaried and hourly workers in the community. Established in 1969, Behlen joined the WGI Westman Group Inc. family in 1988. The company went on to become the first steel building manufacturer in North America to be registered to ISO 9001, and then in 2003 Behlen became one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Private Companies with a Platinum status.

"We had some big ups and downs this year," said Sean Lepper, Vice President and GM of Behlen Industries.

"But the future is very bright. We are lucky to be part of a group that believes in each and every one of us. And that says a lot about the people we have working here."

Originally being known for the high-quality grain bins, Behlen has since switched to focusing on steel building fabrication, taking on challenges and smashing records across the globe. Behlen has been the foundation of buildings used in the 2010 Winter Olympics, the roof of a building to be used in the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympics, and the world's largest frameless building, with a clear span of 313'. Even with such monumental projects, Behlen still manages to produce countless other beautiful and strong buildings across North America.

45-years is a major accomplishment for any company, especially in such a rigorous industry as steel buildings. Because of this, we here at Behlen want to extend another THANK YOU to all the employees whose blood, sweat, and tears went into making this great anniversary possible.



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