

A SALUTE TO AN



CUSTOMER

WINN CORP.

Adding sand and gravel operations kept this southeast Iowa trucking firm growing



Bill Winn,
President



Terry Winn,
Vice President

A little more than a decade ago, the owners of Winn Corp. were faced with the prospects of the business not surviving past the current third generation. Founded in the late 1940s, the business had thrived nearly 50 years doing trucking, spreading ag lime for local farmers and digging and hauling sand from around the banks of the South Skunk River near Ollie, Iowa.

Vice President Terry Winn and his father Bill, who's President, decided if they wanted Winn Corp. to carry on, they would have to look at expansion. "There was a sand and gravel deposit near Ollie that no one was making use of," noted Terry of the move that happened in 1998. "Up until that point, we were buying materials from another company and hauling. We already had the trucks and a customer base to work with. We figured it would be beneficial to start making our own materials."

Throughout the next 10 years, Winn Corp. mined more than a million tons of material out of its initial pit. It's since closed and been reclaimed, but the company has added three locations that serve about a 40-mile radius of its southeast Iowa home base of Fairfield. Just outside of Fairfield is Jefferson County Quarry, Keokuk County Quarry lies near Ollie, while its newest operation, Wapello County Sand & Gravel, is on the edge of Ottumwa.

"Our business is split between our hauling jobs and selling materials to outside contractors and the general public," said Terry. "Our locations put us in a position where we can respond to our customers' needs quickly. Trucking has always been the backbone of the business, and as we've expanded, it's remained that way. We also hire outside trucks as needed. The combination of the quarries and the trucking makes us very competitive in bidding work in this area."

Winn Corp. uses this PC200LC-6 excavator equipped with a Tramac hammer to break up oversized rock at its Keokuk County Quarry.

"One-stop, get-it-all" family business

The Winns estimate they crushed more than 1 million tons of material last year and sold almost as much as they crushed. Winn Corp. used to outsource crushing, but in the past few years through acquisitions and purchases, it's acquired the equipment necessary to do its own crushing and relies on outside help when additional volume may be needed. It also has its own testing labs to ensure quality control.

"Each one of our locations has a full lineup of sand and gravel materials, as well as items such as mulch and wood chips," said Bill. "We call it 'one stop, get it all' because we carry about 50 different products. If we don't have the materials to make a product at one site, we can haul it in from another one with our trucks. But





Winn Corp. uses Komatsu wheel loaders, including this WA450-6 at its Jefferson County Quarry, for loading trucks, maintaining stockpiles and charging its crushers. "Our first Komatsu machine was a WA380-3 wheel loader that we demo'd," said Vice President Terry Winn. "We've stayed with Komatsu because they give us the speed, productivity and versatility we need."

that's not the full extent of our business. We still do contract hauling and ag lime spreading, so the roots of the business are still there."

That contract hauling and ag lime spreading formed the basis for Winn Corp. when Bill's father, Dean, and his uncle Perry founded the company. Bill and his wife, Peggy, who was Secretary, took over operations in the late 1960s. Terry and his wife, Crystal, who's now Secretary, are running operations today. They head up a team that's grown to about 25 employees since Winn Corp. began quarry operations.

The Winns see having a family business as a distinction that plays a big role in the company's success. "Our biggest advantage is knowing our customers on a personal level," said Bill. "In addition to the general public, a very large percentage of our customers are contractors whom we've dealt with for decades, sometimes as far back as the first generation of the business. We've grown a lot over the years, but we've maintained those relationships."

Longstanding relationship with RMS, Komatsu

Winn Corp. has also developed a longstanding relationship with Road



A Winn Corp. operator pushes up a stockpile of material at the company's Keokuk County Quarry with a Komatsu WA380-6 wheel loader. "We've found that Komatsu is ahead of the competition when it comes to technology and user-friendly products," said Vice President Terry Winn.

Machinery & Supplies and Cedar Rapids Territory Manager Delane Wolter. With the addition of sand and gravel operations, Winn Corp. has expanded its equipment list from about six pieces to more than 200 today.

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Quarries provide future opportunities

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Crystal Winn,
Secretary

"RMS and Delane understand the value of customer service," Terry emphasized. "They've always been able to find us equipment when we need it, but what most impresses us is the service after the sale. Whenever I call the Cedar Rapids store, I get a person answering the phone, not a machine, and whoever answers recognizes my voice. I can have a part ordered from RMS in the time it takes to go through the phone

menu with others. They also come right out if we need any service help. Things like that make a difference in our equipment-buying decisions."

Included in Winn Corp.'s equipment list are several Komatsu pieces, including new WA380-6 and WA450-6 wheel loaders used to maintain stockpiles, charge the crushing equipment and load trucks. "Our first Komatsu machine was a WA380-3 wheel loader that we demo'd," recalled Terry. "It had a few hours on it, but it ran great and fit our needs well. We've stayed with Komatsu because they give us the speed, productivity and versatility we need."

In addition to Komatsu wheel loaders, Winn Corp. uses a Komatsu PC200LC-6 excavator equipped with a Tramac hammer, also purchased from RMS, to break up rock and a D65EX dozer for stripping and general site work as needed. The company has also bought a Load King trailer and Gorman-Rupp water pumps from RMS.

"We've found that Komatsu is ahead of the competition when it comes to technology and user-friendly products," said Terry. "When others were still using clutches and foot pedals on their dozers, Komatsu had joysticks. The excavator stands out for its productivity. We're very pleased with the combination of Komatsu machinery and service from RMS."



Winn Corp. Vice President Terry Winn (right) meets with RMS Territory Manager Delane Wolter at Winn Corp.'s Jefferson County Quarry. "RMS and Delane understand the value of customer service," Terry emphasized. "That makes a difference in our equipment-buying decisions."

For stockpile maintenance and general site work around its Keokuk County Quarry, Winn Corp. uses this Komatsu D65EX dozer.



Plenty of reserves left

It looks as though that relationship will last for a long time to come. Winn Corp. has millions of tons of reserves left at its three quarry sites. "We have enough years under our belts that we're confident in our ability to mine, crush and respond to our customers' needs efficiently," said Terry. "With that knowledge and the reserves we have left, we believe we've put ourselves in a solid position for the present and the future."

That future may include a fourth generation as Terry and Crystal have two children, son Jonathon and daughter Tayler. "They're young, so it's hard to tell what their interest in the business is going to be, but it will be here for them if that's what they want to do." ■