



RIVER CITIES ENGINEERING



Synergistic Solutions



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ENGINEERING



Based in Davenport, Iowa, River Cities Engineering provides clients in the industrial and manufacturing markets with a synergistic blend of services pertaining to electrical engineering, control systems integration and electrical construction. They also offer control panel design and fabrication, boasting UL508A and CSA certifications.

President Brad Natzke (Director of Operations) and Vice President Tom Loussaert (Director of Engineering) founded the company in 2004, initially working out of Brad's basement. By embracing "old-fashioned values" such as integrity, strong work ethic and loyalty, they have thrived over the years and have experienced steady, natural growth.



"Tom and I are very calculated about what we do," says Brad. "We've seen a lot of companies try to grow too big, too fast and fail miserably. Tom and I have had a lot of opportunities to double in size, but we've just made sure that we do things the right way. Our reputation is the most important thing to us, and we protect that at all costs."

As a licensed professional engineer, Tom oversees the company's engineering and control systems integration projects. Examples of such work include industrial/commercial power distribution and lighting systems design, arc flash hazard calculations, device coordination, Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) program development, Human



Machine Interface (HMI) software development, and 24-hour support of those types of systems.

Brad complements Tom's role by managing the electrical construction side of the business. For this type of work, River Cities Engineering employs licensed electricians who install power, lighting, control and communication systems— some of which correspond with the systems that Tom and his group design.

"The business model we chose had engineering and construction under one roof, and that's attractive to customers," Brad says. "It facilitates synergy and it saves them time and money to make one call for any type of electrical support. The way we are structured helps us realize efficiencies internally within our organization and for our customers."

In addition to offering clients convenience and efficiency, River Cities Engineering also provides exceptional customer service. That's one of their core values and the main reason for their success, says Brad.

"What we strive to do better than our competition is our customer care. We're passionate

about consistently exceeding our customers' expectations. Over 90 per cent of our work is repeat business from existing customers, and we make every effort as an organization to listen to our customers and then think, plan and execute with ambition every time. We've earned the trust of our customers and that's why they keep coming back to River Cities Engineering. It's what we've built our reputation on."

TOP PERFORMERS

As a small company, River Cities Engineering is committed to employing only "top performers." Brad indicates that this has par-



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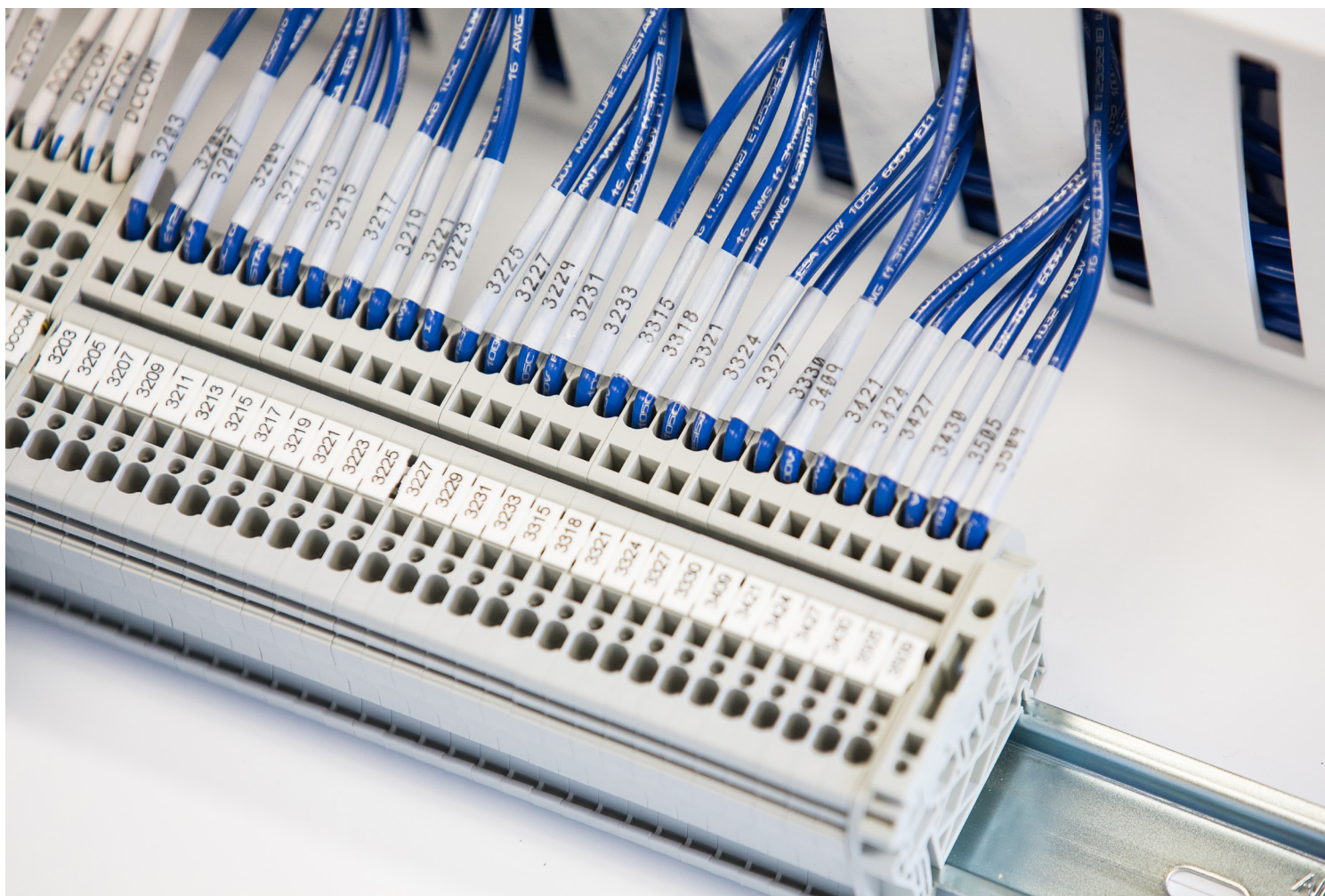
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tially limited their growth, but has simultaneously given them a stronger foundation to build upon.

"We're very selective with who we hire," he states. "We look for individuals who are self-motivated, self-disciplined and take pride in a job well done. We make sure expectations are set high and understood, then we challenge and empower our employees. We give them the tools and the systems they need to be successful, and then let them succeed. In turn, this makes us successful as an organization."

"The type of people we seek to employ don't need to be micromanaged, nor do they want to be," he adds. "This gives Tom and I more time to focus on higher level business management. We compensate our people well with good pay and benefits. We support 'flextime' and we encourage our employees to attend their kids' events, even if it's in the middle of the workday. We do understand the importance of retaining employees. Ultimately, we want our employees to retire from River Cities Engineering, and we want their lives to be enriched because of their time with us."





Today, the company employs 28 highly skilled and adaptable staff members. Thanks to the versatility of their workforce, River Cities Engineering can and have serviced several different types of industries, including steel, aluminum, pet food, agricultural, chemical and discrete manufacturing.

"As each type of industry expands and contracts at different times, it gives us a steady volume of work, so we are diversified and balanced at the same time," Brad explains. "Also, we provide several different electrical services –engineering, integration, and construction—and that also keeps us balanced.

TWINSTATE
TECHNICAL SERVICES

“ Twin State has been with us since the beginning, and they are the perfect example of what a business partner should be. Without fail, they are responsive, professional, and consistently provide the technical support we need to be successful. ”

—Brad Natzke, Director of Operations



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Most of our employees are cross-trained and can fulfill several types of roles, so as the project loads vary in the different divisions of our company, we can move people around and not worry about missing a beat."

Brad also credits the company's suppliers, subcontractors and vendors for River Cities Engineering's success over the years. He describes those stakeholders as being "extremely valuable" to their operation, viewing them as "more than just places to buy products or services."

"Our suppliers, subcontractors, and vendors

support us on a daily basis," he says. "Our customers are very demanding, so it's important that we have the right type of support systems in place. We do business with companies that share the same type of core values as us. We consider them true partners and we put a lot of trust in them."

"A lot of our projects are fast-tracked and we have a lot of control systems in place at our customers' sites," he continues. "Our customers rely on those systems 24/7 to run their processes, so if one of our customers' control systems is down, it's critical that we respond in a very timely manner— night or day. So,



it's important to us to make sure our relationships with our vendors are solid so that they can be as responsive as we need them to be."

SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES

In 2014, River Cities Engineering received a Platinum STEP safety award from Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) for

their steadfast commitment to keeping their workers safe. The company has now gone over two years without experiencing a single recordable or lost time accident. According to Brad, safety is "first and foremost" within the organization.

"Tom and I want all of our employees to make it through the workday and get home

safe every day," he affirms. "We provide in-house quarterly safety training and we review all of our safety policies and procedures on a quarterly basis. Most of our customers require us to complete site-specific training annually before our personnel are allowed to be on their site. We also complete JSAs (job safety analysis) daily, and before any other type of task is started."

"It feels good to be recognized for all the efforts that we put towards safety. All of those efforts are paying off – not just because we got the award, but because we've gone over two years without any recordable or lost time accidents. At the end of the day, more than anything, Tom and I want our personnel to be safe."

Brad and Tom are now looking to build off of their recent success by staying focused on fostering controlled growth and by enhancing their existing systems to improve efficiency. Case in point, they recently launched a new accounting software that supports mobile timekeeping and offers more management tools for their key staff members to make use of. They are also in the midst of implementing an employee portal on their website to provide their personnel with access to the

"systems they need to be more effective."

River Cities Engineering also has a pair of short-term goals they are aiming to achieve in the near future. One involves working with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation to put systems in place to bring back an employee who was involved in a hunting accident two years ago that left him paralyzed from the waistdown.

"That would mean a lot to us and to him once he's able to return and be productive," says Brad.

Their second short-term goal involves advancing through the ranks of the Control System Integrators Association (CSIA). They are currently members of the CSIA, and are now looking to upgrade to become certified members.

"That will demonstrate our commitment to meeting the highest standards for business and management, and it combines technical proficiency with sound business practices," Brad concludes.



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