

# Family owns, grows Mid-States Concrete Industries

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**SOUTH BELOIT** — For three generations the Harker family has continued to maintain and expand the family-owned business known today as Mid-States Concrete Industries.

The business began when Charles V. Harker founded Mid-States Concrete Products Co. in 1946. Presently the business, Mid-States Concrete Industries, is led by Harker's son, Charles H. Harker, as CEO and his grandson, C. Hagen Harker, as president.

In 2016, Mid-States benchmarked its 70th year in business, Hagen Harker said in a recent interview. The company employs about 220 people and manufactures wall panels, CarbonCast insulated wall panels, Hollowcore, beams, columns and balconies. Mid-States offers a variety of architectural finishes, as well as custom precast elements.

The company provides products to southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois and eastern Iowa, in about a 200-mile radius, Hagen said.

Hagen Harker recalled that his grandfather, Charles V. Harker, worked for the Illinois-Wisconsin Concrete Pipe Company in South Beloit in the early 1940s. When World War II began, Charles enlisted in the Army. After the war, he returned to South Beloit and learned his previous employer had ended its Hollowcore production. He found support to start his own business, Mid-States Concrete Products Co.

Hagen Harker's father, Charles H. Harker, graduated from Denison College with a degree in economics and became involved with the family business in the 1960s.

"He remains the CEO and is active in the business every day," Hagen Harker said.

Hagen Harker earned a degree in engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and began working for the company in 1993.

Since joining the business, Hagen Harker has seen growth and expanded product lines at Mid-States.

"A greater demand for our products are a result of three things," he said. "First, there was an exodus of construction workers during the recession. That led to more and more prefabricated or precast products. While there were fewer construction workers, the upside is that precast work is safer and goes up faster."

"Second, there were code changes



Photo by Debra Jensen DeHart

**Hagen Harker, president of Midstates Concrete Industries, center, stands with several employees of the company located in South Beloit. The company celebrated 70 years in business in 2016.**

due to energy use and the importance of building energy efficient buildings. The number one use of energy is heating and cooling buildings in the U.S. With buildings and building materials, precast is the gold standard," he added. "Third, there is the regional factor, being close to Interstate 90."

Mid-States does precast concrete work for commercial and public buildings, including multi-family housing projects, office and retail structures, food industry and manufacturing sites, gymnasiums and field houses for schools in Beloit and Rockford and more. The company completed the wall panels for Beloit Memorial's new swimming pool, for example. Mid-States also has completed work for the Department of Transportation.

"We serve a market of about 200 miles and we install our products," Hagen Harker said.

Mid-States manufactures its products year-round at 500 S. Park Ave. in South Beloit.

Hagen Harker also said the compa-

ny is involved with the Stateline Area in philanthropic ways. That includes having school supply drives for area students and toy drives for the Salvation Army at Christmas time. Mid-States also is a contributor to the United Way agency, contributed to the new Stateline Family YMCA facility and the new heart hospital facility at Beloit Memorial Hospital.

Mid-States also has been highly involved with the Beloit 2020 group and the Confluence project. The Confluence occupies the area where Turtle Creek joins the Rock River, the most historic point in the area because it was long occupied by Native Americans before the first European-descent settlers arrived. The land is open to the public and is a designated launch area for the Rock River Trail. It is located at 306 Dickop St., South Beloit. People can launch kayaks and canoes on Turtle Creek and then head out to the river.

Mid-States will complete concrete work for a new building for the project and a significant portion of the cost will be done as an in-kind

donation.

Other members of the leadership team at Mid-States include Jeremy Olivotti, vice president of preconstruction; Jaron Combs, vice president of construction; Mike Wolff, vice president of safety and plant operations; Ann Frey, vice president of finance; Lisa Braddy, director of human resources; Richard Bergemann, director of engineering; and Michael McNett, information technology manager.

One area Hagen Harker emphasizes is customer service.

"We've been built on caring for the customer and doing the right thing," he said.

In the future, a company goal is to expand employment and the product line.

"We do have plans to add additional manufacturing and office space," Hagen Harker said. "It's exciting to see the Stateline Area grow and see jobs and development coming to the area."