

DRAWING STRENGTH FROM GENERATIONAL

In 1853, Charles Ruedebusch, Sr., an immigrant from Germany, arrived in Mayville, Wisconsin a scant five years after statehood. Mayville was booming, and was home to a number of German immigrants as well as the state's first iron-ore mine and smelter which set up in 1849. Charles started his own department store which became quite successful, and in 1875 he bought the Mayville Lime Works — “much against my will and inclination,” according to a book he wrote in 1903 to celebrate the department store's 50th Golden Jubilee.

At the time, the Lime Works was quarrying limestone as well as producing lime for the iron smelter. It also produced quicklime, used primarily for masonry. But Charles' reluctance didn't last long, and with a lot of hard work and successfully navigating many a bump in the road, Ruedebusch and the employees turned the quarry into a thriving business. They even opened an office in Chicago to market their quicklime.

In 1915, the company started to produce and market agricultural limestone. By 1928, when the struggling iron-ore mine closed (thanks to richer fields in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota), and certainly by the 1940s, aglime was well on its way to becoming the company's primary product, especially as more and more farms took hold in the region.

Although crushed stone sales have always been a part of the company product line, in the 1960s, demand rose. Today, about 60 percent of their business is construction aggregates, especially during the summer months. “Last year our crusher was running 12-14 hours a day,” says Tony Smith,

President. “And we could barely keep up with our own demand.” Products include screenings, state spec TB products, three sizes of clear stone, breaker run, blast run, and 3/8-inch chips for ice control.

The aglime side still forms much of their business, including three kinds of their own bagged product as well as bulk.

TAKES A LICKIN' & KEEPS ON TICKIN'

Incorporated in 1891 as Mayville Limestone, the company today is still run by the fifth-generation descendants of the Ruedebusch family. It is also Mayville, Wisconsin's oldest continuously operating industry. Historic photos from the company's archives show in the 1960s a rope shovel and Euclid trucks were the preferred means to quarry. Today, although “Eucs” are still their truck of choice, the rope shovel has long been replaced by a Kawasaki wheel loader.



Making its quarry debut in the '80s, this ZII Series is the first of several generations of Kawasakis at the quarry.

Kawasaki first made its debut at the quarry in the 1980s with a ZII Series. Since then, four or five others have cycled through, with their current 95ZV-2 first punching the time clock in late 2008. It seems fitting that generations of Kawasaki loaders have helped keep this old quarry running strong.

The company opened up their shot pattern in the limestone about six years ago. So the material coming out of the blast can be rather large and wayward. But despite the beating, their Kawasakis keep on working.

“We never used to buy new equipment,” admits Smith. “But the only new piece we will buy is our yard loader. I haven't had a chance to get out there and run this particular one yet, but I intend to. The Kawasaki is a very good machine. We've demo'ed Kawasaki, Komatsu, and Cat®, and I think this loader is just as good as, if not better, than the ones that claim they are the best. Our next step would probably be that new 115 loader. We really enjoy all of the people at our Kawasaki dealer, American State. Anytime we have a problem, they are here for us.”

TIMELESS ADVICE

Among the nuggets in Charles Ruedebusch's 1903 book, is this piece of timeless wisdom: “The success of any business of some importance is dependent to quite an extent upon the character of its employees.” Smith couldn't agree more.

Mayville Limestone is serviced by American State Equipment, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



WISDOM

Some of the shot limestone can be quite large. Mayville Limestone's 95ZV-2 is the latest in a series of Kawasaki wheel loaders that tackles the rock with ease.