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**NOTE:** Sequencing in book is from present to past.
The Raimondo Family – Behlen Owners

We are proud to be sharing Behlen Mfg. Co.’s 80th year in business as a year of “Celebration and Change.”

The Three Eras In This History Book Are:

• 1984 - Behlen was losing ($7 million) per year and was returned to local ownership with a management buyout by TR Raimondo, Dick Casey, Bob Theilen, and Steve McGill

• 1969 – Behlen was sold to the Wickes Corporation, a $4 billion conglomerate.

• 1936 – Behlen started in the family garage

Presently the evolution of time has resulted in the Raimondo Family being the majority shareholders, going forward primarily with the Basic Beliefs established at the time of the return to local ownership.

The Vision Statement has deep meaning. Let’s share some thoughts:

“WHERE TEAMWORK AND CHANGE MAKE CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES BETTER OFF”

• Why Teamwork? Unified teamwork is difficult to achieve and sustain. Teamleaders need to work on this daily to reinforce mutual respect and trust within teams and business units.

• Why Change? Most people recognize change is difficult. Behlen Partners in Progress need to embrace positive change and continuous learning to meet customer demands and stay ahead of tough competition.

• Make Customers Better Off? This one is obvious. Engaged team members search for ways to add value for our customers in a manner that helps them grow their business. When a customer reorders, we can grow together.

Employees Better Off? We believe all Behlen team members have the same goal, to make our families better off; therefore we have an integrated sharing system and good benefits.

Integrated Sharing System - Our sharing concepts best define why our employees are called Partners in Progress. When Partners in Progress make us better off in the key areas of SAFETY ~ QUALITY ~ and PRODUCTIVITY, Partners in Progress will share in the improvements through monthly Gainsharing (productivity improvement), bonuses, and annual Profit Sharing bonuses.

To encourage personal development and company growth, we offer 100% tuition reimbursement, and internally, we post career growth opportunities. We hope everyone understands personal growth is the key to company growth.

Open Communication – We provide monthly transparency of company performance information, in addition a Direct Line is also provided for easy and comfortable access to leaders.

The Raimondo family remains committed to leading-edge research related to effective family organization, performance, and generational transition.

Together we can be global leaders in the markets we serve!
Behlen has a Great Heritage built by innovative, strong leaders. They developed a reputation of quality and had a vision to continually pursue global competitiveness. Every day, we build on the foundation set by past leaders to design a Bright Future. Our diversified Business Units have helped us survive and succeed during market ups and downs. As we look to the future, we have strengthened our Leadership Team and added skills and talent to improve our performance in the globally competitive world. We are proud to be celebrating 80 years in Business and look forward to continuing to lead this great company for many years to come.

As we update our history book this year, the Leadership Team has declared “2016 – The Year of Celebration and Positive Change.” Every company that has been in business for 80 years has much to celebrate. Getting to this milestone is a major accomplishment. We have many stories that describe our survival and success in the past. The common thread that links our past, present, and future is the relationships we build. These relationships start with our 950 Partners in Progress (employees) who understand that we are a sharing company. That means when Behlen is better off, we share with our Partners in Progress through Gainsharing and Profitsharing. Our belief is that Customers are key to our job security when we earn their next orders. We also recognize our customers need us to continuously improve the way we take care of their needs. This includes developing better products, faster deliveries, and improving communications. Over the years, we have also built strong relationships with our suppliers, lawyers, bankers, accountants, and community leaders where we live and work.

We are making strategic decisions in our business that will position us for future success. We moved a Behlen Country Plant from Tennessee to McGregor, Texas in 2012. We exited manufacturing buildings in China and used the machinery and equipment to upgrade our Buildings Product lines in Columbus in 2015/16. We are using lasers and robotic welding more every day. We acquired Hilton International Industries in 2014 to diversify and move into higher technology manufacturing.

We are also investing in our Partners in Progress. The Gallup Q12 engagement survey was used this year to help us understand how our people feel about our environment. Meetings were held to share the results and provide an opportunity for everyone to talk about ways to make Behlen a better place to work. Our job posting system and tuition reimbursement program open up ways for our people to grow (see Jen Miller’s testimonial on page 11).

We have revised and upgraded our Building Blocks, developed over the past 30 years, for better understanding and to enhance the message. The titles are clearer. A definition is provided for each value, and desired behaviors are listed. The upgrade has been published as “Behlen Global Values” and are presented on page 10 to explain the culture we live at Behlen.

Community involvement has been important throughout our history and in 2015 a significant financial investment was made in the Columbus, Nebraska community. The Raimondo Foundation was one of the first major contributors to the “Quality of Life” initiative. This started as a way to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education in the new high school. The program expanded to include the new Wellness Center (YMCA), East Central Health District, and Library/Cultural Arts center. As one of the major businesses and employers in the community, we are proud to support these community investments. We also want to recognize all Partners in Progress who give their time and treasure to our communities.

It’s a great time to be a part of The Behlen TEAM.
Behlen Board Members

**DIRECTORS**

TR Raimondo  
Phil Raimondo  
Tony Raimondo, Jr.  
Lyle Burbach  
Dick Casey

**OUTSIDE ADVISORY**

Bob Theilen  
U.S. Senator Ben Nelson  
Robert Meaney  
Brad Robeson  
Gary Gotsdiner

**Bob Theilen**  
Retired Senior Officer at Behlen, with more than 60 years experience.

Board member since 1999. Following his eight years as Governor.

**Robert Meaney**  
Retired Sr. V.P. of Valmont, joined the board in 2012. Bob had more than 90 manufacturing plants around the world reporting to him.

**Brad Robeson**  

**Gary Gotsdiner**  
Legal, McGill, Gotsdiner, Workman & Lepp. Gary has been with us since our buyout in 1984 and did most of the legal work with Steve McGill.

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**Dick Casey Shares Some Thoughts on our 80th Anniversary**

Behlen has achieved another remarkable milestone - 80 years as a company. We now belong to a rare group of organizations who can say we are 80 years young and strong.

Today, we are a much different company than just 10 years ago. New leaders, more global in the distribution network for our products, and in the utilization of the latest technology of the dot com world.

However, we retain the qualities of the Behlen heritage - the strength of our work ethic and the entrepreneurial spirit of the earliest culture of the Behlen legacy. Being diversified in our businesses and dealing in an ever faster-changing world will require exceptional leadership. Our leaders, Phil, Tony, Jr., and Lyle will carry on the traditions that will bring Behlen to new levels of success. This leadership team will help us weather the ups and downs of the marketplace and to compete in this global economy.

Behlen continues to reach out and listen to its Partners in Progress, its customers, and external partners - banking, legal, auditing, and consulting. We have built an enduring model because we focus on their needs to change and we change with them.

It is an honor and a privilege to be part of the Behlen team.
Leading The Return to Local Ownership

Bob Theilen shares an overview of the guy he hired (TR).

A. F. (TR) RAIMONDO, presently, Behlen Chairman and Coach.

Skills acquired in TR’s earlier business career provided him with the background to accept a major challenge in 1984...the Turnaround of Behlen Mfg. Co.

TR spent most of his career in large corporations. In 1962, upon completing his BSME Degree from Michigan Technological University, he joined the General Motors Corporation where he received management training and supervisory experience. His next step was into the aerospace industry with Moog Inc. in western New York. It was with Moog that TR began to cultivate his people skills and hone many of the management philosophies that he expresses today. While with Moog, he obtained an MBA from the University of Rochester (New York).

A subsequent career move in 1976 took him to Omaha, Nebraska as General Manager, of Vickers, a $90 million hydraulic products manufacturing division of the Sperry Corporation. In 1982,

TR was recruited by the Wickes Corporation to head up their Behlen Manufacturing Division in Columbus, Nebraska.

When TR Raimondo is asked about his goals in life, he will respond very simply, “To create jobs and provide an environment to help people grow.”

TR developed his love and respect for the plant workers while growing up in a working class neighborhood of Buffalo, New York. His father, Phil who passed away in 1960, was employed as an assistant coiler in the Bethlehem Steel Mills; and TR, from the example set by his dad, gained a never-to-be-lost respect and admiration for the people who took their places on America’s production lines. TR worked his way through college as a steel worker. In 1960, he married Jeanne who worked as a telephone operator until TR got his Mechanical Engineering degree. TR’s mom, Carmela, lived with TR, Jeanne, and their children until she passed away in 2004.

TR learned from family and friends that great creative strength existed in the minds and hands of employees at every work station in the company. He learned that, if the opportunity arose, almost every employee would demonstrate abilities that could substantially contribute to their company. “Give people the opportunity, and they will make a difference,” he says. This trust and respect in people resulted in Behlen creating a never-ending opportunity for team members to contribute ideas, learn new things, and share as all Partners in Progress strive to make customers, and all of us, better off.

The lessons of early youth were never lost on TR, when he had full rein to test his theories in the real world – as a C.E.O.

These early lessons were to be shaped into strategic elements and Basic Beliefs (Global Values).
The PIK (Payment in Kind) Impact

**Shipments fell from $50 million in 1982 to $25 million in 1983.**

PIK was most accurately described as a government shift from subsidies for grain storage to the idling of farm land.

It became apparent that Wickes, struggling to come out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, could neither sustain efforts to diversify Behlen nor could they wait for grain storage markets to return.

In early 1984, TR was presented with the inevitable three options:

1. Auction off the company assets and close the doors
2. Find a willing buyer
3. Pursue a management buyout (LBO)

In TR Raimondo’s mind, there was no option. His position was, “We have 300 people depending on us to keep the company alive. It’s our responsibility to make every effort to save our company and as many jobs as possible.”

The management buyout team was comprised of TR Raimondo, CEO; Dick Casey, CFO heading up finance and accounting; Vice President Bob Theilen, who led Human Resources, Advertising and Public Relations activities; and Omaha attorney, Steve McGill, who was a personal friend of TR and was instrumental in the buyout effort. The management buyout was completed on May 4th, 1984.

Now the new ownership team, TR, Dick, Bob, and Steve, had to find ways to reverse the major losses and bring stability back to Behlen. They accepted the challenge with enthusiasm.

Stephen McGill, our beloved Partner and attorney (whom we lost in a car accident in 1997), initiated acquisitions with TR and the business unit leaders to create Behlen Country which was a key diversification.
Strategic Changes

The First Order Of Business Was To Make Significant Strategic Changes In:

- Organizational Design
- Marketing Strategies
- Culture

Organizational Design

Introducing Matrix Management

Nobody at Behlen had even heard of the term, let alone been exposed to the concept. The traditional functional top-down approach had always been used. Now this guy from western New York was telling his managers that there was a better way...a horizontal matrix system. It would be the key to pursuing leading edge teamwork, value added for our customers, and growth opportunities for our Partners in Progress.

Almost immediately, the design, pricing, fabrication, and marketing of specific product lines became a “team approach.” Everyone on the team participated in a hands-on approach from order entry on through to shipping and delivery on Behlen (owner/operator) trucks.

Initially, it was an approach that traditional vertical organizations found hard to accept. In some cases, old line managers could not adjust to the new way of getting things done, and they were encouraged to find a better fit outside the company. Acceptance was not easy, but eventually happened. Horizontal business units began to benefit from the unified focus on customers, competitors, pricing decisions, etc.; thus, strong teams developed with motivated minds. The key is an overlap at the point of handoff from one function to the next in the horizontal teams, to minimize errors for the customer, and improve Profit Sharing.
Marketing Strategies

Business Focused on Diversified Markets.

Behlen began to move in a new direction. The horizontal business units were challenged to:

- Pursue new products into new markets
- Introduce existing products into new markets
- Pursue export opportunities
An emphasis on mutual trust and respect led to an “End Of Time.” In 1984, time clocks were eliminated in all work areas and Partners in Progress were trusted to record their individual work hours in a company-wide honor system.

An article in the Columbus Daily Telegram stated that Behlen is “a company that is vividly demonstrating the value that it places on its employees.”

The people-oriented leadership team style that TR introduced to the company was having a revitalizing effect. His approach included a variety of critical elements highlighted below.
A concern for people – we replaced time clocks and rules with an honor system, guidelines, and a test of reasonableness

A passion for productivity through continuous improvement and learning – A.I.M. (Awareness is Money) teams and a sharing system including Gainsharing and Profit Sharing

A horizontal management organization style to involve people at all levels

A search for continuous improvement and learning with people capable of focusing on customers and Profit Sharing

A conviction that all business units will pursue a value added strategy for customers
A Tradition and Commitment to Continuous Learning

The Raimondo Family Experience

Tony (TR)
MBA - U. of Rochester '72
Jeanne
BSBA - UNK ‘00
(at age 60)

Phil
BSEE - Purdue U. ’84
MBA - Purdue U. ’98

Tony Jr.
BSBA - UNO ’90
MBA - Ohio State U. ’02

Linda
BS Pharmacy - Drake U. ’91
MBA - Drake U. ’91

Diana
BSBA - UNL ‘93
MBA - Creighton U. ’99

Behlen provides opportunity-Jen Miller makes it happen!

Jen began her career with Behlen Mfg. Co. on August 11, 1997, when she was hired as a Machine Operator for Behlen Country. Throughout the years, Jen utilized the posting system and gained valuable knowledge through a variety of positions within the company. She had a strong desire to continue her education and made the decision to use the Behlen Tuition Reimbursement Program. In 2005, she graduated from Central Community College with her Associates Degree. Jen’s ambition to continue her education was fueled by her desire to advance within the company and gain additional responsibilities. She continued to use the posting system and decided to go back to school to pursue her Bachelor’s Degree, and shortly thereafter continued to earn her MBA from Bellevue University in 2009. Jen didn’t stop there; she again used the posting system and was awarded the General Manager position of Custom Fab in 2011.

Personal, as well as career growth drove Jen to excel in the positions she has held. In 2014, Jen was a recipient of The Manufacturing Institute’s Women in STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Production) Award for Women in Manufacturing. Jen achieved her most recent accomplishment in November 2014 when she posted and was awarded the position of Behlen Country General Manager.

Behlen is excited to see what the future holds for Jen. This testimonial is a great example that shows how the posting system and tuition reimbursement program can be used by all Partners in Progress to make themselves and the company better off.
Long-Term Partners in Progress

50 Year Club

(Seated l to r): Mark Pfeifer, Bob Schmid, Arden Saalfeld, Bob Theilen. Standing Leadership Team (l to r): Phil Raimondo, TR Raimondo, Tony Raimondo, Jr. Not pictured: Sam Case, Erv Heesacker, Bill Kubas, Rich Robak

40 Year Club


Norm Prosocki, Rich Robak*, Bruce Rossmeier, Gary Sedlacek, James Settlemyer, Paul Siemek, Delores Stuh*, Ron Tuma, Doris Van Diest*, John Wald, Jim Weldon, Milt Wennekamp, George Werner, Terry Young, Dave Zlomke
*Honorary Members
Business Unit Leaders

Lyle Burbach
Senior Vice President
Co-President - IDP
44 Years at Behlen
BS & MBA

Tony Raimondo, Jr.
Vice Chairman of the Board
Co-President - IDP
25 Years at Behlen
BS & MBA

Jen Miller
General Manager
19 Years at Behlen
Behlen Country
BS & MBA

Heather Macholan
General Manager
22 Years at Behlen
Custom Fabrication
BA

Russ Bartling
General Manager
Strip Joining Presses
18 Years at Behlen
AAS, BA, MBA

Tom Morgan
General Manager
< 1 Year
Hilton Industries
BSME, MSIE, MBA
Brian Turner
Vice President & General Mgr.
8 Years
Distefano Technology
& Manufacturing
BA

Steve Becker
36 Years
V.P. Sales & Marketing
General Manager Team
Behlen Building Systems
AAS

Roland Augspurger
General Manager Team
21 Years
Behlen Building Systems
BSCE

Jami Schoch
General Manager Team
23 Years
Behlen Building Systems
BBA

Jay Wetsch
General Manager Team
13 Years
Behlen Building Systems
AAS

Shandy Hand
General Manager
2 Years
BMC Transportation
BA
The International and Diversified Products (IDP) business unit consists of three product categories as described below. The combination of these categories permits our team to share resources in manufacturing, engineering, and sales to provide our customers quality products with top value. As global competition becomes more intense, IDP is changing and adapting to remain competitive.

**Grain Systems**

The Grain Systems category refocused its business strategy in the mid-1980s. Triggered by the government’s 1983 grain acreage reduction program (Payment in Kind) and the ensuing agricultural recession, Grain Systems adjusted to declining domestic markets by aggressively pursuing a new international strategy. The acquisition of the Berico Dryer Company in 1985 was a key factor in leveraging Grain Systems current market presence to more than 70 countries worldwide. This exposure, combined with our ISO 9001 Quality certification, provides a baseline by which customers develop confidence that they will receive a high level of quality in all products and services.

A look toward the future reminds us that more than 96% of the world’s consumers live outside the U.S. We have an opportunity to contribute even more significantly to standard of living improvements in developing countries. An adequate food supply is the foundation for maintaining a satisfied, productive population. Grain Systems is positioned to serve a significant role in this development.

**Strip Joining Presses**

In the mid-1960s, Behlen developed a proprietary metal stitching press which continues to be an important product line today. This hydraulically-operated machine joins together the ends of two coils of metal. It facilitates “continuous flow” processing of metals in coil-coating and other coil line production operations. We have shipped more than 875 presses to 54 countries.

**Custom Fabrication**

Our Custom Fabrication group focuses on key customers for whom we provide a competitive advantage through our manufacturing and customer service processes.

New opportunities for the Custom Fabrication Group are determined by several criterion: a sustainable growing market for the product; the capability and capacity to produce it; a sustainable, competitive advantage. The future for custom fabrication is bright. As the manufacturing sector continues to change due to global market trends, we expect to leverage our capabilities into exciting new businesses.
Behlen Country is the nation’s leading manufacturer of livestock and ranch equipment. Our products include: gates, corral panels, wire mesh fencing, bale feeders, cattle management systems, feed bunks, horse stalls, dog kennels, steel and poly stock tanks, waterers, and 3-point equipment.

Behlen Country’s competitive advantage lies in offering our customers industry leading quality, the broadest product family, fast delivery, excellent customer service, and new products from our plants in Baker City, Oregon, McGregor, Texas, and Columbus, Nebraska.

In the 90’s, our approach to the market was to have a unique brand for every customer (Farmaster, Big Valley, etc.). At the turn of the century we committed to the Behlen Country brand to fit with the market changes and customer consolidation. Today, we continue efforts to strengthen the Behlen Country brand and also provide private labeling. One of the keys to becoming the supplier of choice to our retail customers is to create the highest quality products in the eyes of our end-user customers, the farmers, ranchers, and hobby farmers who take pride in their country lifestyles, and who make the buying decisions at retail stores.

Good marketing and brand building requires great products that meet or exceed the expectations of our customers. Several years ago, as our product line was growing at a fast pace, we decided to create Category Management Teams (CMT’s) to better focus on customer segments and the products these customers buy.

Another key to creating a successful business is operational excellence. Maintaining ISO 9001 certification ensures product quality and reliability.

By combining great products, a strong brand, and highly efficient and lean operations, we are in a leading position to offer our customers the best value in livestock and ranch equipment products. Competition is always improving and never far behind; however, we remain committed to creating a high level of customer satisfaction for both our retail and end-user customers. We will continue to raise the bar because we firmly believe that the company creating the best value for its customers will be the one ultimately winning in the marketplace. Check out our new web site, www.behlencountry.com.

BMC Transportation, a division of Behlen Mfg. Co., is an authorized contract and common carrier licensed for general commodities in 48 states and the Canadian provinces.

BMC Transportation has grown steadily since being granted General Commodities Authority in 1983 from 25 to 85 owner-operators. Today BMC Transportation travels over 10 million miles per year providing on time, personalized service to Behlen customers. Our owner-operators serve as ambassadors to our customers and are a key strategic partner delivering Behlen Country products to more than 4,500 retail outlets.

BMC Transportation provides a competitive advantage in serving our customers and the regional plant concept of Behlen Country. Their performance is essential to Behlen’s continued growth.
The growth and success of Behlen Building Systems over the past 50 plus years has been dependent upon our commitment to customer satisfaction and adding value. We strive to be the best in the industry at providing quality and leading-edge customer satisfaction.

Behlen Building Systems entered the metal building market in 1950 with the introduction of a self-framing building system known as S-Span. The Behlen S-Span system soon became recognized for its strength and durability. For 35 plus years, Behlen focused on ag buildings and rural community buildings.

In the mid 1980s, our focus shifted towards metropolitan commercial and industrial markets. As our company grew in the industry, our people began to be known as the Good Iron People. This reputation was earned with a manufacturing work ethic and attention to detail that provides building systems that fit together; thereby reducing construction costs. This quality helped us establish long-term relationships with Behlen builders across the country.

As our building business unit continued to progress, our engineering capabilities allowed us to expand our product line with the types of buildings you see pictured here. Our company grew geographically, as well, with an expanding network of builders located across the United States.

For 10 years, starting in 2002 Behlen Buildings were made in Beijing, China. The partners in our original Joint Venture decided to exit the building manufacturing business. After an unsuccessful search for a new Joint Venture partner, we decided to ship equipment to our Columbus plant.

Today, the Behlen name is well known for offering exceptional buildings and for having an established team committed to providing leading-edge customer satisfaction in the industry.

Behlen is a charter member of the Metal Building Manufacturing Association (MBMA) and is currently ranked 8th by the MBMA in sales volume and is focused on increasing market share.
Behlen acquired Distefano Tool and Manufacturing (DTM) in September 2008. At the time, DTM’s main businesses were metal laser cutting and fabricating, CNC machining, and Tool and Die work. DTM had a loyal customer base and a strong reputation in the industry. Under Behlen’s ownership, DTM moved toward higher technology manufacturing by purchasing several robotic welding machines and higher powered lasers. New customers were added to the portfolio, and DTM firmly established itself as a provider of quality manufactured parts and products.

In 2011, DTM moved into a new 160,000 square foot facility in West Omaha. The new facility offered much needed room to grow. With its new focus on manufacturing technology, DTM was renamed Distefano Technology and Manufacturing. Currently DTM has 100 employees and pursuing growth with a focus on high tech manufacturing processes. Many of our newer customers are in high tech industries such as renewable energy, automated material handling, and bulk liquid filling processes. Our goal is to target new market opportunities while continuing to service our established customers with great quality and service. With our advancing technology and engaged partners in process, we feel the future is bright for DTM.

Behlen acquired Hilton on February 1, 2014 - located in Sarasota, Florida. Hilton has enjoyed a leadership position providing customized machines with integrated computers to control material tension, length, and speed of process. Hilton’s custom machines are sold internationally to companies that produce capacitors for power transmission and distribution equipment, transportation and lighting, and alternative energy markets.

Since 1958, Hilton has sustained a leadership position in the film, foil, and mixed dielectric capacitor winding machine industry, selling to industry leaders like G.E.; ABB (Sweden); Alston (Europe); Trench (Canada); and Terralink (Russia). Hilton has an experienced team and a new General Manager, Tom Morgan, building their custom machine capability. We at Behlen are optimistic the Hilton Team can be competitive in global markets to support existing customers and pursue new products in established and new markets.
Grain Systems introduced the Omega Bin Sweep.
Departed the building manufacturing business in China.
Building Systems sold several buildings for the 28 acre Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo African Grassland Exhibit.
Tara Obrist recognized by The Manufacturing Institute as a recipient of the STEP Award.

2015
Bob Theilen hired in 1955 has more than 60 years of combined service in roles of Partner in Progress and Board Member.
Fire Brigade celebrates 60th anniversary.

2014
Robert Meaney, retired Sr. V.P. of Valmont, joined the Behlen board in 2012.

2013
Custom Fab purchased a two headed Alltra plasma machine.
Building Systems upgraded purLine.
Certification for FSL AC10 and IAPMO.

2012
Behlen Building Systems, with TL Sund Constructors, built the Monsanto Water Learning Center to research drought resistant crops.

2011
The 18,000th AIM (Awareness Is Money) Idea was submitted by Tim Beister. Since its inception, the AIM program has recorded savings of more than $14,000,000.

2010
Robert Meaney, retired Sr. V.P. of Valmont, joined the Behlen board in 2012.

2011
IDP designed and built the first-in-industry 1.5 million bushel corrugated steel grain bin with a clear-span roof.

2016
Behlen Building Systems opened a new sales and engineering office in Boise, Idaho.
Behlen received the MBMA Participation & Support Award.

2016
Behlen was awarded the Midwestern International Trade Association (MITA) Exporter of the Year Award.
Behlen Building Systems received Canadian Standards Association (CSA-A660) certification to sell and manufacture buildings in Canada.

Great Heritage, Bright Future.
Behlen received the Nebraska Innovation in Manufacturing Award.

Behlen received the MBMA Participation & Support Award.

BMC Transportation received the Great West Platinum Safety Award.

During Nebraska Governor Heineman’s Reverse Trade Mission, our private sector Chinese partner, Mr. Xu, formally announced a partnership with Behlen to provide his patented geothermal, single well concept in the United States under the Aqui-Flo brand name.

A new CNC plasma machine manufactured by the ALLtra Corporation was installed at the Columbus plant primarily to manufacture building beams but also used for IDP products.

Leadership Transition. TR moves to Chairman & Coach. Phil, Tony Jr., and Lyle move to Senior Leadership Team.

Behlen achieved its most favorable level of productivity as it returned to the $180 M shipment range.

Behavior Building Systems became the first metal building manufacturer in United States to achieve International Accreditation Service (IAS) AC472 accreditation. Behlen Building Systems welders became Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) certified.

Behlen became the first company in the industry to design a one million bushel corrugated steel bin of this size with a clear-span roof.

Behlen received the Bronze MBMA Plant Safety Award.

Bill Kubas became the first 55 year full-time Partner in Progress with Behlen.

Behlen received the Bronze MBMA Plant Safety Award.

Behlen received a Vocational Rehabilitation Award from the Nebraska Department of Education for employing high school seniors looking for a career in manufacturing.

Behlen received Silver MBMA Plant Safety Award.

Behlen receives Silver MBMA Plant Safety Award.

Behlen received the Bronze MBMA Plant Safety Award.

Behlen Building Systems introduced the ZL-24® Zonal Lock Roof System panel.

Fire Brigade celebrated 50 years having started in April of 1956.

The Columbus plant received the Nebraska Safety & Health Council Award.

Behlen received the Nebraska State Edgerton Award for Excellence in Quality and Continuous Improvement.*

Behlen Building Systems welders became Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) certified.

ACQUISITIONS & EXPANSIONS
(Detailed Chart on Page 9)
Behlen successfully downsized to survive a U.S. manufacturing recession that caused a loss of jobs. Gov. Johanns honored Behlen for expanding markets abroad and creating export jobs in Nebraska. TR Raimondo was inducted into the Ak-Sar-Ben Court of Honor.

2003

Behlen signed a joint venture agreement in China. Behlen manufactures buildings in Beijing for the China market. Behlen was selected as one of the Top 100, by Training Magazine. Over 800 companies applied and Behlen placed 74th.

2002

Powder coat paint line installation was planned for all three plants to give customers a premium finish that is also environmentally friendly. Behlen was recognized as the 2002 Nebraska Industry of the Year by Nebraska Diplomats.

2001

Duane Acklie joined the Behlen Board. Duane is the chairman of the Crete Carrier Corp., Nebraska company. Sadly, Duane passed away in September of 2016. Behlen received a $200,000 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Quality’s Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grants Program.

1999

U.S. Senator Ben Nelson, a former Nebraska Gov., joined the Behlen Board. Behlen was recognized as the 2002 Nebraska State Edgerton Award for Excellence in Quality and Continuous Improvement.

2004

In March, TR Raimondo received Presidential appointment to be the first “Manufacturing Czar” (asst. Sec. of Commerce). Due to Presidential year politics and senatorial issues, TR chose to decline. Behlen celebrated ISO 9001 certification. ISO 9001 is our internationally recognized quality registration – May 1999-Present.

1997

Behlen lost one of its owners/directors, Stephen McGill, in a tragic car accident.

2004

Ruby Behlen and her son, Kent, accept award on behalf of the late Walt, Mike and Gib Behlen as they were inducted into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame. They were recognized for both their business and many financial contributions.

2003

Bill Kubas was recognized for being our first Partner in Progress to work 50 years full-time for Behlen.

2002

Behlen received “Nebraska State Edgerton Award for Excellence in Quality and Continuous Improvement.”

1999

TR Raimondo was inducted into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame for his contributions and dedication to make Nebraska a better place to live and work.

1999

Governor Mike Johanns presented TR Raimondo with the Waggonmaster Award at the annual Nebraska Statehood Day dinner.
1984

Behlen Mfg. Co. received the President's "E" Certificate for exports from the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

1986
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The Behlen 50th Anniversary open house.

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Our first supplier appreciation day was held.

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"Inc. Magazine" awarded TR Raimondo/Behlen "National Turnaround Entrepreneur of the Year Award".

1989
Dick Case and Bob Thelen hosted a delegation from the People’s Republic of China.

1993
Behlen paid back community Block Grant to the city of Columbus and an Urban Development Action Grant to the city of Richland ahead of schedule.

1999
A galvanized bomb pallet order for the U.S. government was in full swing. Behlen team members stepped up and produced a record 256 pallets in one day, plus 900 pieces of fencing.

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Behlen was returned to local ownership. The management buyout was completed on May 4th, 1984.

1995
A record profitable year. (F-’94)

1996
Sixty years of Behlen history (1936-1996) was captured on canvas by Dorthae Paul, a well known contemporary artist from Morton, Minnesota.

1992
Behlen took part in the community Quincentenary and the Bell Tower project by contributing the fabrication of 25 benches.

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Five years of working together, the "new" Behlen turned in its first profitable year. Shipments hit $61.6 M.

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The Wickes Corporation

A Shift of Focus from Product to Growth

Wickes Corporation acquires Behlen

• Introduction of a new management style
• Behlen, a division in a large public corporation
• Corporate mandate – to double volume in five years

The Wickes Corporation, then based in Saginaw, Michigan, had a business philosophy not unlike other growing corporations of the time; i.e. growth for the sake of growth. They were a big and successful organization. Their goal was to get bigger.

Behlen became a target for acquisition for two reasons: first, because the company was showing sound profits; second, because Walt Behlen and his brothers were approaching retirement ages, and family ownership would eventually present estate problems. They closed the deal and Wickes took the reins.

Behlen was performing well and generating strong cash flow when Wickes acquired it in 1969. Wickes used this cash for funding its own aggressive corporate expansion and acquisition plans. Unfortunately, a significant amount of cash was moved out of Behlen for these purposes and very little was left for Behlen capital improvements.

1975 – Union formed

1978-1979 – Purchased $6 million capital investment in grain bin equipment

• Dick Casey joined Behlen in 1978

Wickes Files for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

1982 – The penalty of growth for the sake of growth

• Wickes, a $2 billion conglomerate acquired Gambles with combined revenues hitting $4 billion

• The result pushed Wickes into Chapter 11 in April of 1982
• Sanford Sigaloff was hired to head up a Wickes Turnaround Team
• Behlen identified as a “core” company of the Wickes Corp.
• TR Raimondo joined Behlen as General Manager in August of 1982

New Wickes (Chairman Sandy Sigaloff)

The year was 1982 when Wickes filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and it was also the year TR Raimondo was first introduced to Behlen. At the time, Wickes was in deepening trouble, and TR had reason to be skeptical of any employment offer.

TR’s question to Sandy Sigaloff, newly appointed Wickes CEO, was to the point – “What happens on the down side if we run into a surprise?”

A lot of credibility was behind Sandy’s reply. He had been chosen to lead Wickes because of his experience in turnaround situations. According to the Wall Street Journal, Sigaloff was a high profile, talented guy, and Wickes went after the strongest turnaround leader they could find. Wickes, at $4 billion in corporate sales, was the biggest Chapter 11 up to that time.

Sandy, in response to TR’s question, was equally direct. “TR, I’m not able to give you anything in writing; however, our plans are for Behlen to remain a core company, and your role would be to diversify the company. Should a surprise occur on the downside, you can have confidence that in the end you will be either: 1. substantially better off or 2. part of the action.”
The Wickes Corporation

“Truthfully,” TR states, “I did not know what ‘part of the action’ meant.” History now clearly identifies that Sandy had significant experience in handling spin-off situations when a struggling corporation was attempting to exit Chapter 11. The meaning of his statement to TR was to become very clear.

An Uphill Challenge

At the outset, when TR joined, Wickes stood by its commitment to stand behind Behlen, and funding an expansion program was part of that commitment. Over the next twelve months, $6 million in new capital was invested in Behlen. In fact, Behlen received as much capital infusion in one year as it had received from the corporation in the prior twelve years.

But neither Wickes nor TR could foresee the serious blow that was about to hit Behlen’s core business, i.e., grain storage, handling and drying equipment.

Challenge At The People Level

TR faced a significant challenge at the “people level” when he first stepped into the top management position at Behlen – and it wasn’t exactly smooth sailing from the employee relations point of view.

The management style introduced by the Wickes Corporation was strongly authoritative. Predictably, many workers became disillusioned and discouraged. It’s no wonder that a union proposal found quick acceptance. Wickes’ management style had opened the door, and many employees warmly received the United Sheet Metal Workers in 1975.

When TR arrived on the scene, skepticism was the existing state of mind for the majority of employees. Suspicions and rumors were being spread throughout the plant. “Wickes brought TR in to break the union. When the union goes, so will TR.”

Fortunately they were dead wrong! TR was at Behlen to stay, and there was no other thought in his mind.

And the union was no problem. As a matter of fact, TR had no feelings of animosity toward a union. He had come from a union background as had his father. “If the people believe a union is needed to give them fair representation, it should be respected and so should its members,” TR said.

However, in 1983 Behlen employees voted to decertify the union. In early 1984, TR and team purchased Behlen.

The metric grain bin line - the largest capital expenditure made by Wickes.
Walt’s first successful product was not exactly earth shaking, but it did fit a very specialized need – steel toe caps for industrial wooden soled shoes. The shoes were used primarily in automobile factories to protect workers’ feet from acid and high temperature conditions.

Toe caps were soon followed by an inventive idea that grew out of Walt’s experience as a railway express agent. He realized that the single-use lids on egg shipping cases were costly to egg producers, and so he came up with a practical solution – reusable egg case lid clamps.

With the success of his early ventures, other product ideas were soon to follow. By 1943, Behlen had become a full-time manufacturing business.

Walt often reminisced about his startup years. “Most of the machine tool equipment in the garage was made from parts salvaged from a local junk yard,” he said. “Equipment consisted chiefly of a homemade forge, a large grinder with Babbitt bearings (which we poured ourselves from scrap metal), a welder and a number of hand tools.”

Predictably, the garage was soon too small and the enterprise expanded to a building in downtown Columbus along the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The move coincided with a major change in agriculture – the introduction of picker-shellers for corn. Taking advantage of the new technology, Behlen soon became a major supplier of corn husking rollers for use in corn pickers.

Along the way, brothers Mike and Gib and their father, Fred, had formed a team to expand product development and marketing efforts.

It was 1946 when a much larger (200’ x 200’) manufacturing facility was constructed on an industrial site on the east edge of Columbus. With more space to grow, the product line surged forward to serve a vibrant farm market with items such as wire-mesh corn cribs, grain bins, tractor gear boxes, and a variety of other items.

The year was 1950 when a “Honeycomb” building...
(as it was called at the time) was first introduced. It was truly a unique building, assembled from rolled steel panels that served as both the structural component and skin of a building. No interior framing was required.

Using the new building concept, a 40,000 square foot addition was made to the existing plant. Demonstrating the inherent strength of the revolutionary design, heavy tractors were suspended from the ridge along the length of the building.

The Behlen frameless structure gained nationwide recognition when it survived an atomic bomb blast during government tests at Yucca Flats, Nevada in 1955. The Behlen “Atomic Test Building” soon became popular in both commercial and agricultural markets.

Continuing growth was predictable, and in 1956, the existing plant was again expanded by 80,000 square feet. The Behlen brothers seemed to have a sixth sense for high-profile promotion opportunities.

Their involvement in the highly publicized atomic test was certainly an example of that sensitivity. But another opportunity was soon to follow.

The 1962 World’s Fair was scheduled to be held in Seattle, Washington, and a search for unique attractions was underway. One idea considered by fair promoters was to exhibit a huge pile of silver dollars – one million to be exact. At the time, it was an astronomical sum of money. The questions – how could it be done and who would be willing to do it?
The Behlen Brothers

The concept eventually made its way to the ears of Behlen Sales Manager, Gerry Joseph, who in turn, presented it to the Behlen brothers.

The idea, a bit overwhelming at first, was enthusiastically accepted, and logistical planning began.

The silver dollars were to be carried from the U.S. mint in Philadelphia across the country in two semi-trailers. They could be viewed through special windows, and each stop along the way was heavily promoted. Thousands of people were to see the dollars before they even got to Seattle.

At the fair, the dollars were housed in a specially designed Behlen building. How were they displayed? In a Behlen corn crib, of course!

The nationwide publicity was spectacular; but even more significant, the sale of silver dollars and medallions at the fair covered the entire cost.

As some friends were to say, “Not a bad trick for a bunch of country boys.”

A new manufacturing facility covering 350’ x 700’ was constructed four miles east of Columbus (using the frameless building system, of course). The site was designated by the Union Pacific Railroad as Behlen, Nebraska. Here the company continued to prosper and grow with multiple plant additions over the next 10 years. Time, however, dictated change in the ownership structure, which led to an eventual acquisition by the Wickes Corporation, then based in Saginaw, Michigan.
Walt Behlen’s Universe, a biography by William H. McDaniel is the story of a Nebraska farm boy who dreamed of becoming an inventor and manufacturer. It lists his many accomplishments, awards, and honors as he made his dreams come true. It also chronicles his many worldwide travels.

A few of the awards and examples of philanthropy are noted below.

**Walt Behlen Awards**

- Public Service Award from the Federal Civil Defense Administration
- Articles in Time and Fortune naming him “Corn-Belt Edison”
- Silver Medal of Achievement from the Poor Richard Club
- Honoree at the “1968 Nebraska Dinner” hosted by the Newcomen Society in North America
- Horatio Alger Award in 1968, the first Nebraskan to be so honored
- Granted honorary doctorates from the University of Nebraska, Midland College, and Doane College
- Nebraska Academy Of Sciences Friend Of Science Award 1976

**Walt Behlen Philanthropy**

- 2 - $10.00 donations to First Baptist Church, Walt’s first donation in the ledger in 1941
- $20,000 for improvements to Columbus High School, the Behlen Family’s Alma Mater
- Donated the building and assisted financially for the Columbus Family YMCA (1959)
- Over $500,000 to the University of Nebraska State Museum over a period of years
- Donated substantially (2,000 shares of Behlen stock) to the Department of Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Nebraska
- Assisted in funding ($400,000 to NU Physics Building) the Behlen Laboratory (1959)
- Assisted in funding the Behlen Community Hospital (1964)
- Assisted in funding the Behlen Observatory (1971) at the University of Nebraska

2004 Nebraska Hall of Fame Award – Family Celebration

Behlen family members gathered for the Hall of Fame dinner where Walt, Gib and Mike Behlen were posthumously inducted into the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame. Seated from left: Rose Behlen (Gib’s wife), Lois Behlen (Mike’s wife), Ruby Behlen (Walt’s wife). Standing from left: Benjamin Behlen (son of Rod & Georgia), Rod Behlen (son of Gib), Nikki Behlen (wife of Benjamin), Fred Behlen (son of Mike), Georgia Behlen (wife of Rod), Dave Senften (husband of Karen), Eliza Behlen (daughter of Fred), Kurt Behlen (son of Gib), Karen Behlen-Senften (daughter of Mike), Donna Behlen (wife of Kent), Kent Behlen behind Donna (son of Walt), Stephanie Johanns, Governor Johanns, Sophie Behlen (wife of Fred), Roman Hruska (husband of Mary Ann), Mary Ann Behlen-Hruska (daughter of Walt).
1969

- Grain bins began to take the place of corn cribs.
- In December of 1959, construction began on the Columbus YMCA utilizing a Behlen building.
- In 1963, construction was underway for the Columbus Ag Park, a Behlen building.
- One million silver dollar display at the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair.
- Senator John F. Kennedy visited the Behlen plant during his campaign run for president.
- The talented and effective Economic Development Leaders broke ground for the new Behlen plant east of Columbus.
- Behlen introduced a hydraulic press used in steel industries to join ends of steel coils in continuous production lines. The company had developed the presses many years before for its own use in trimming steel building panels.
- Behlen grain bins and grain dryers became the company’s largest selling line.
- At the height of the Cold War, underground bomb shelters were widely touted. Behlen got into the game with a packaged unit. Sales, however, were negligible.
1945
Behlen received its first bank loan of $6,000.00, its first significant expansion capital.

1944
Brothers Gib and Mike joined Walt and their father, Fred, in the enterprise in this same year. The company entered the grain drying field.

1950
The first Behlen frameless building was introduced. Walt described it as a stressed skin monocoque frameless steel building.

1955
The Behlen frameless stressed skin building was tested at the atomic blast test site at Yucca Flats, Nevada.

1946
In 1946 a new 20,000 square foot factory was completed on the east side of Columbus.

1949
Brothers Gib and Mike joined Walt and their father, Fred, in the enterprise in this same year. The company entered the grain drying field.

1952
The company designed one of the first power steering units for farm tractors.

1955
Bob Theilen joined Behlen. He served in a number of key interim roles during periods of transition from Wickes ownership to be a key owner in the 1984 management buyout.

1956
Always inventive, the Behlen family believed that galvanizing steel rod after assembly welding would be the key to producing a superior corn crib. They also designed and built a mesh welding line used to this day. For many years, Behlen cribs were the primary form of corn storage in the United States.

1945
Per Walt Behlen the Behlen Company was launched with “zero capital.”

1936
The product that really got Behlen up and running...steel toe caps for wooden shoes manufactured for the Reese Wooden Sole Shoe Company in Columbus.

The Behlen Company was launched with "zero capital."
Behlen Locations

Columbus, Nebraska

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Baker City, OR 97814

Omaha, Nebraska

Distefano Technology & Manufacturing
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Omaha, NE 68144

McGregor, Texas

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McGregor, TX 76657

Sarasota, Florida

Hilton International Industries
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Loveland, Colorado

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