

ADVERTORIAL



Dreaming Big Good for Business!

Entrepreneurs and successful business leaders are wired to dream big and to chase those dreams with both desire and conviction - that is what sets them apart from the rest of us. But it is hard to believe that even Adrien Trudeau, a former Ponoka High School welding teacher, and his wife Louise, could have imagined the dream that is unfolding on the corner of Hwy 53 and Hwy 2 as the company they cofounded 19 years ago prepares for the grand opening of its new facility.

Originally opened in 1986 as Mr. Steel, the company was renamed in 1992 as Almita Manufacturing Ltd., and in 2010 was renamed again to Almita Piling Inc. to better reflect its brand as an end-to-end foundation solution company. The company has been manufacturing foundation screw piles for 19 years in a collage of small buildings in the Ponoka Industrial Park and has seen its business grow substantially over the years. The Trudeaus attribute their success to Adrien's trade skills and passion for research and development, Louise's management skills and the fact they surrounded themselves with great people.

In its early days, as with most new businesses, Almita started small with only a couple of employees working out of a single building. Ken Stebner, one of the original employees and now one of the company's shareholders, speaks fondly of the early days when it was all hands on deck to complete an order. "The same group of employees did it all" he says. "We would sell it, we would build it, and then we would go install it. It was a very different time when we first started out. But it was lots of fun." Today, Almita employs over

100 people, most of whom have roots in the Ponoka area.

Almita's business really started to grow in the mid 90s after the Alberta government legislated that drilling rigs operating in the province needed to be anchored to the ground as a safety measure to prevent the rigs from tipping over, thereby protecting workers from injury and death. Almita's screw piles were the perfect solution.

A screw pile is essentially a steel pipe with a single or multiple helixes welded to the shaft which enable the pile to literally be screwed into the ground, much like a screw going into a piece of wood. Screw piles provide foundational stability against compressive loads (downward force), lateral loads (side-ways force) and moments (bending force) and are used to support a variety of structures including buildings, oil pipelines, pump jacks, residential decks, telecommunication and electrical towers, racking for solar farms, just to name a few. Screw piles also have significant pull out resistance (think how difficult it is to pull a screw out of a piece of wood with a hammer), which enable them to be used as screw anchors on structures that run the risk of tipping over such as telecommunication towers, electrical towers or even drilling rigs.

In 2005, the Trudeaus decided to sell a majority share of Almita and begin to enjoy the fruits of their years of building the business. Adrien and Louise remain as minority shareholders and board members and continue to help steer the company towards even greater success.

Under the new ownership group, Almita began to look to the future. In 2006,



they brought in a new President, Larry Kaumeyer, to help lead the company on a major growth path. Business continued to grow as did the number of staff and the number of buildings from which the Almita team operated.

Fast forward to 2011, and Almita is preparing to write the next chapter in its storied history with the opening of its brand new state of the art manufacturing facility and head office.

"The demands on our business have really changed over the years" says company President, Larry Kaumeyer. "Today we are doing very large, multi-million dollar projects that are very complex and at the end of the day our customers are expecting more from us in the completion of those projects. We are building a world class company and in order to keep growing and meeting the demands of our customers, we needed to make a major investment in our future. These new facilities represent that future and were an absolute necessity for our continued success" Kaumeyer says proudly.

In addition to significantly expanding Almita's production capabilities, the new facility boasts a number of environmentally friendly components including solar panels and a wind turbine for generating electricity, a grey-water recovery and recycling system, energy barriers to help prevent heat loss in the winter, and interior furniture made from recycled or renewable materials. "Being environmentally responsible is just good business and it is important that we give back in this way to ensure the future of our children for generations to come" reiterates Kaumeyer.

Kaumeyer adds one final point "trying to utilize local Ponoka companies was important to us during the building process. We have a long-standing tradition of supporting Ponoka as a great place to live and conduct business so it only made sense to utilize Ponoka companies wherever we could. I am thrilled with our new facilities and I am thrilled we are still part of the Ponoka community."



**It is important to dream
and to dream big.**

**After all, without big dreams,
this province would not be
what it is today. And for
Almita, it would appear that
dreaming big has indeed
been very good for business.**