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spotlight on

KOENIG EQUIPMENT

In today's reality of corporate acquisitions, mergers, and foreign buyouts, company longevity under the same management may seem to be a thing of the past. So when a company has been owned and operated by the same family for over 100 years, it is cause for celebration.

Such a company is Koenig Equipment, a farm implement dealership. Upon entering the Shared Resource Center just outside Botkins that serves as the hub of operations, one is greeted by four wall collages painted in 2004 to represent each 25-year segment of the company's growth through four generations.

The company is now under the leadership of Aaron Koenig, president and great-grandson of founder John C. Koenig who left the employ of International Harvester in 1904 to start a farm and general hardware store in Botkins. The business grew into the Botkins Hardware Company under the leadership of John C.'s sons: John, Bill, and Emerson. Emerson's children - Ray, Ken, JoAnn, Jack and Greg - achieved unprecedented sales growth and geographic expansion as third generation owners.

Today in its fourth generation, the Koenig name graces 11 Ohio stores in Botkins, Anna, Urbana, Greenville, Germantown, Oxford, and Tipp City, as well as locations in Logansport, Rossville, Huntington, and Gas City, Indiana.

Koenig sells everything for the farm—combines, tractors, hay equipment, and sprayers, as well as equipment for planting and seeding. "We are a full service dealer," said Aaron. "We have new and used equipment, plus parts and service. Our most recent growth has been in the lawn and garden equipment area."

"The average age of farmers is 60, but they must adapt to more and more technology to use the equipment," continued Aaron. "Farming is not just planting and harvesting; it is managing and marketing, analysis and decision making."

The brands Koenig carries include many well known in the industry, including Case IH, John Deere, Honda, Stihl, Frontier, and Ferris. It is very unique for a dealer to be authorized to carry both Case IH and John Deere. Koenig

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KOENIG EQUIPMENT



For their 100th anniversary in 2004, Koenig Equipment commissioned local artist Paul Melia to recognize our one hundred successful years serving the farm, rural, and lawn care markets. The originals are proudly displayed in our corporate office in Botkins, Ohio.

markets John Deere in Ohio and Case IH in Indiana.

"We are committed to education. Today's farm is 'precision agriculture.' There are new technologies for running the equipment, planning your business, and recording data," said Aaron. "We often connect to customers and manufacturers through social media. We recently launched our own app which is a great way to educate our customers on new products and services. Since our business is seasonal, it is important to stay in touch throughout the winter months."

Besides ensuring a strong future by educating customers about and

through the latest technology, Koenig is still strongly connected to its past. "One of the keys to our success has been the continuity of leadership," said Aaron. "My goal is to keep family in the family business. There are five third-generation and six fourth-generation family members working at the company. I want to make sure that the business transfers to the fifth generation."

That being said, Aaron was quick to explain that having the family name does not ensure an automatic hire. There is a family constitution that defines employment and family members are held to the same standard as other employees. To be considered for management, they must have three years of experience

outside the business and two career advancements. "We pride ourselves on fair governance and structure, not just great products," said Aaron. "All our employees must buy into our clearly defined culture and six core values."

Those values are ownership, service, standards, teamwork, courage, and learning. The company vision is simple: "We want to be the preferred choice of customers, employees, and manufacturers."

The 125 descendants of Emerson Koenig gathered recently to celebrate the family business, so it appears that the legacy of John C. should easily continue into the fifth generation and beyond.

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