

# ARDEL STEEL

CUSTOMER-INSPIRED GROWTH



*With the addition of reinforcing steel installation services last year, employment at Ardel Steel jumped by 20 workers, bringing the employee count up over 60. The company, which began as a two person operation in 1980, has seen significant growth over its 30 year history. Customer responsiveness has been one of the keys to Ardel Steel's continued success. Arnie and Craig Matt reflect on the growth of Ardel Steel and its evolution into a family business.*

**A**rnie Matt founded Ardel Steel with a focus on serving homebuilders. He and one other employee operated from a 10' x 12' wooden shed with a single truck and some old equipment, buying rebar from steel service centers. With a great deal of hard work, he grew his business to a point where he was buying steel directly from mills and positioned Ardel Steel to compete for industrial and commercial markets.

## ARDEL STEEL AT A GLANCE

**Size** 60+ employees

**Locations** Regina, Saskatoon

**Claim to fame** Rebar fabrication

**Other products** Steel beams, teleposts, basement braces, tools and accessories, rebar installation services

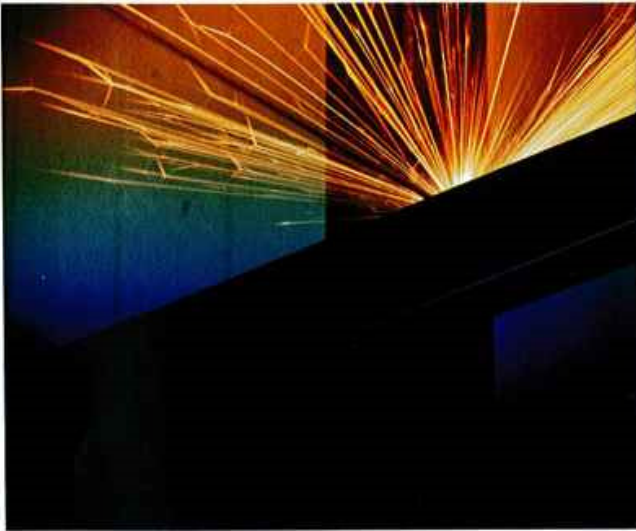
**Innovation** the Ardel Power Post

**Sectors** Residential, commercial and industrial

**Community contribution** Habitat for Humanity, United Way, other community charities

"Arnie's strength is his vision for the future," said Craig. He is a source of ideas and is detail-oriented. "He has such a great feel for the markets peaks and valleys and has an uncanny ability to make changes to the organization at just the right time. It has been integral to our success."

Of Craig's strengths, Arnie noted that he brought enthusiasm and a fresh perspective coming from the hospitality industry. "It was the addition of Craig that made Ardel Steel a family business," said Arnie. "In becoming a family business, we also became more than just a typical employer to our workers."



Though the Matts have occupied separate roles within the company, they are united by their commitment to customer responsiveness. It has formed a marketing foundation that ultimately helped them to grow Ardel Steel. "Basically we just listened to what the customers and what the industry needed. Then we added it as a product," said Craig. "When you add more products, you need people to sell it, administrate it, fabricate it, and so on." Some of the resulting additions were tools and products that help place the rebar. "Those products were added because we want to meet the customer's needs."

Through expansion, Ardel Steel remains focused on its core business. "We try to diversify as much as we can, but we don't try to overstep our bounds by taking too much on. Instead, we try to stay efficient, and that is one of our keys to success."

Craig credits Ardel Steel's success to its "fantastic, dedicated, professional staff," home builders, large and small contractors and the relationships it has formed through the local construction associations. All customer relationships have been valuable. "If you ask any of our customers, they will tell you that they are our best customer," said Craig. "That is how we got our reputation, because we treat all of our customers well."

In looking to the future, Craig sees opportunity. "We still want to grow. We still want to be the best at what we do and be a good employer," said Craig. Ardel Steel is proud to be part of Saskatchewan's growth. "In the end, we just want to continue helping build the projects that our customers are building. You look around at the projects we've supplied. We're very proud to see how we have our fingers in so much growth in the province."

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