

# THE BUSINESS NEWS

Serving Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan & Winnebago counties

September 5, 2016

www.thebusinessnewsonline.com

Vol. 14, No. 10 \$1.00



Daniel and Patty Shea are marking the 10th anniversary of their company this month. The Business News photo by Jean Peerenboom

## ‘Old-fashioned’ values a key to success

Oshkosh electrical contractor has grown every year since its founding 10 years ago

Shea Electric & Communications LLC is an electrical contractor with strengths in all low-voltage systems, but what the company’s name doesn’t immediately convey is that the company is in the people-development business first and foremost and “just happens to be” a commercial electrical contractor.

It’s an approach that has served the company well as it approaches its 10th anniversary this month.

Daniel Shea, chief operating officer, built the business at 1922 S. Washburn St. in Oshkosh on a foundation of faith, character and knowledge with his wife, Patty. “I was driven to create a business based on old-fashioned values,” Shea said.

Shea is a strong believer that if he works on the business (including his employees) and becomes a solution-oriented partner to his customers, results will follow. Two great reads on the effectiveness of this approach: Employee longevity and morale, as well as sales, both of which continue to escalate. “We’ve had 10 to 30 percent growth each year, every year,” Shea said. “It’s word of mouth and relationships, relationships, relationships.”

The proof is in customer loyalty. Since establishing the business, Shea hasn’t lost a single customer from his database but has turned down jobs or turned away a handful of previous customers because they weren’t the right fit.

“When you walk into a customer’s [business] and they want the cheapest price, that’s not our customer,” he said. “We want people to understand we always give a good/better/best solution and it’s their decision, because

it’s their business. We sit down on the front end and spell it all out so they know what they’re getting. They may be paying more, but they get value because we anticipate the bigger picture beyond their immediate project.”

Shea Electric & Communications LLC is well positioned to do just that. It is a true full-service electrical contractor that works throughout Northeast, Southeast and Central Wisconsin, catering to diverse industries including industrial and manufacturing, education, healthcare/ hospitals/nursing homes, retail/office buildings, food processing/service, financial institutions, government/municipalities and energy/environmental.

Shea’s specialty is low-voltage work including electrical contracting and electrical service work as well as lighting, audio/visual, voice/data/fiber optic, intrusion, life safety, access control, cameras/CCTV and secured wire partitions.

They self-perform 95 percent of these services/systems in house with the exception of fire alarm/nurse call systems for which they serve as the installing contractor.

“While 80 to 85 percent of contractors do electrical work, low voltage often is a specialty,” he said. “Then, add to that that we do data and voice and (the other services) and we are unique,” he said. “We do it all well because we invest a lot of money and time on it, with education and a big room in the back (of our facility) where we test products before we even consider using them.”

He said it’s important to be a single source “because who wants to call six different people

“  
We know our purpose and we live a pay-it-forward mentality. If a potential customer gives us a chance, we can ‘knock the skin off the ball’ and earn all their future opportunities.

— Daniel Shea,  
chief operating officer,  
Shea Electric & Communications,  
Oshkosh

”  
for their electrical, data and other needs?” They hand pick their partners for systems that range from fiber optic to lighting.

Shea estimates about 50 percent of work is on the electrical side (line voltage) and the other half in low-voltage services. “We’re very diversified and looking to diversify more; it all starts with conversations with the customer,” he said. “Often, they have a problem and it’s our job to find the solutions. Sometimes, that means bringing on a new product or service.”

In many instances, that means embracing technology. Shea said that one of the best decisions he’s made is to go paperless four years ago. “It was a great move,” he said. “Our employees have smartphones, iPads and laptops in the field now. We even went so far as to create our own electronic plan table in an aluminum enclosure

that we run on larger projects.”

This keeps the communication from field to office running smoothly with everything from that project residing in the cloud and managed from the office electronically. “I only see this getting better as Generation Y journeymen and journeymen start populating our industry,” he said.

When it comes to staff, they rank extremely high on Shea’s list of priorities. He considers the company very progressive in its policy, procedures, training and culture. Employees also have access to speakers, training (including cross-training, an area of emphasis for Shea) and regular reviews to ensure they have what they need to fulfill the company’s vision.

“I’m really fortunate that all of my employees share a similar purpose and belief system,” he said. “We are fans of Simon Sinek and Start With Why, we know our purpose and we live a pay-it-forward mentality. If a potential customer gives us a chance, we can ‘knock the skin off the ball’ and earn all their future opportunities.”

Shea counts his own focus on self-development and working on the business versus just in the business as instrumental to the company’s growing success.

“I joined TEC in 2010 because there wasn’t a playbook to work from, and the trial and error approach was expensive,” he said. “I love our customers, our employees and the members of my TEC group. They have all helped me grow our company so that we ‘Win as a team, we lose as a team.’ I’m very blessed.”