CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS
Tree Island Steel manufactures over 400 types of nails and fasteners in North America.
At Tree Island Steel, we celebrate our success every day. Our team of dedicated employees, value added partners, and loyal customers continue to provide us with opportunities to grow and thrive in the wire industry. 2014 is a special year. 50 years ago on September 17th, 1964 - Tree Island began an epic journey that would ultimately bring our company to the forefront of steel wire and wire product manufacturing.

On the eve of our company’s “Golden Anniversary”, we’d like to look back at some of the events that marked that journey in North America.

“We have emerged from unprecedented economic challenges stronger and leaner and we are well positioned to grow to lead our industry into the foreseeable future. While our core strength has been our highly skilled and knowledgeable work force, the next leg in our journey will be exciting as we groom and transfer this knowledge to our new generation of Tree Island employees. Along the way, we will continue to build on our heritage and pride in the work that we do, and the product quality and service excellence we deliver... this will define the next Tree Island 50 year legacy.”

Dale R. MacLean
President and CEO

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”
- Benjamin Franklin
“Tree Island has superior products for the livestock industry. It is great to be on board with a company that understands what a customer is looking for.”

Larry Fieght
Owner of High Country Ag
Marketing of Whitehall, MT
In 1964: Lester B. Pearson was Prime Minister of Canada, NASA worked to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade, The Beatles topped the pop charts and Mary Poppins was flying high at the box office. Meanwhile, on a very small island, in what was then the Municipality of Richmond, BC, Canada, a business was starting to emerge. Yes, at one time Tree Island really was a small island in the middle of the Fraser River and in 1964, Abe Sacks decided it was a good location to manufacture wire for his bedding company. Wire product was readily available in places like Chicago, but the cost to make and ship it was exorbitant. When it became apparent that it could be made locally for less, the island property was acquired and a fledgling entity unto its own had begun. Shortly afterwards, the portion of river that separated the land from the main chunk of Richmond was filled in, allowing easy access and plenty of room to grow.

The decision showed great foresight, because at the time, the business of wire drawing lacked representation in Western Canada. In these early years, Tree Island Steel was a small, privately owned operation. Two of the first executives to come aboard were Arthur Block (one of the two well known “Block Brothers”) and the legendary Leon Kahn.

Undoubtedly spurred on by the lofty ambitions of the B.C. Government at the time, construction in the province was rampant and economic optimism was high. It didn’t take long for these founders of Tree Island Steel to realize that diversification would be fruitful.
From mine mesh to high quality wire products, Tree Island Steel is recognized as an industry leader.
The 1970’s and 80’s

Bright wire was the original product, and in time, machinery was acquired to make galvanized wire. As sales increased, production quickly ramped up. Then, just eight years after commencing business, financing was put in place to purchase K-Lath Stucco Wire, an American company started in 1944, that produced welded and non-welded wire reinforcing products for the stucco industry. By purchasing the company, Tree Island became K-Lath’s principal supplier, which in turn enabled the company to produce yet another value-added product. Other products that followed included agricultural fence, barbed wire, field fence, utility fence and of course a product that has become synonymous with Tree Island nails.

Products sales were good, but selling to local lumberyards while competing with the larger and more established companies, was proving to be costly. The strategy required a large sales force and, at one time, six distribution centres. In the early 1980s a decision was made that would revise this strategy and take Tree Island to another level. Tree Island’s then President and CEO, Jack Keeler, set about meeting with the likes of MacMillan Bloedel, Canfor, Weldwood, Boise Cascade and other companies that were importing and selling other domestic brands from Eastern Canada and the United States. An agreement was struck whereby, they would support Tree Island and in return, Tree Island would agree to stop selling at the retail level and focus on selling products for distribution.

That decision proved to be a masterstroke. Tree Island’s nail mill boomed and production soared from 1,000 to 5,000 tonnes a month. Now a player in the big leagues, Tree Island acquired another US company. This time it was Advanced Wire in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

In 1986, Tree Island went public on the Toronto Stock Exchange and three years later, was purchased by US wire rod producer, Georgetown Industries, for $110 million. An added $30 million in capital enabled the company to purchase new mesh and nail machines, packaging equipment and infrastructure.
Tree Island Steel serves a wide range of specialty customers in oil and gas, telecommunications and manufacturing.
In 1992, Georgetown appointed Mr. Ted Leja as President and CEO and the immediate years that followed were certainly prosperous ones. In 1997, ownership was transferred from Georgetown to Bain Capital, that in turn, sold Tree Island to Tricor Pacific Capital Corporation of Vancouver.

At the start of the new millennium, Tree Island acquired Halsteel Nail Company, a California-based producer of collated nails - and a firm that perfectly complemented Tree Island’s product offering. Just a year later, in 2001, the company acquired Industrial Wire Products based in Pomona, California. Not only did Industrial Wire Products have a nail business, it also ran a bright wire drawing business. As such, it allowed Tree Island to feed the raw material to Halsteel. This provided a big boost in revenue and once again drove up the value of Tree Island.

In 2006, The Futura Corporation, founded and owned by Mr. Amar Doman, became the company’s majority shareholder. As Chairman of the Board of Tree Island Steel and through Mr. Doman’s tireless dedication to creating shareholder value and his vision for long term thinking, his leadership was instrumental in reengineering the company into one of the largest and fastest growing steel companies in Canada.

In 2009, Mr. Leja came out of retirement to serve as Tree Island’s interim President. During this time he played a pivotal role in helping the company successfully navigate the stormy seas of the economic downturn.

In 2011, Tree Island appointed Mr. Dale MacLean as the Company’s new President and CEO. He has an accomplished track record of performance and a resumé that includes executive postings with Taymor Industries, one of North America’s leading designers and distributors of home and commercial hardware, plus two decades with BC Rail and CN Rail.

Soon after his arrival, Mr. MacLean set about developing a strategy with his executive team. The goal: restoring Tree Island to a position of financial and commercial stability, profitability and a platform that drives sustainable growth and shareholder value. Driving ahead with a sense of urgency and purpose, it has taken three years and many long days, but the strategy is working and the goal is in sight.

“Having such a high caliber of management is important, but no article on Tree Island would be complete without recognizing the hundreds of workers who, without question, comprise the heart and soul of the Company,” notes our current CEO, Dale MacLean. Right across the board in all departments, Tree Island has a team that’s as talented as it is dedicated. In our United States and Canadian Operations, over 50 employees have been a part of Tree Island for over 30 years. Plus, Len Pennington (40 years), and Ivo Herenda (42 years) in Canada, and Ralph Leyva (41 years) and Bill Harvey (41 years) with the US operations. Danni Comuzzi, who’s now been with the company since it began making bedsprings in 1964, is celebrating 43 years with the Richmond plant.
Tree Island Steel manufactures the finest stucco reinforcing products in the industry.
North American Growth

The word “Bright” may describe much of Tree Island’s wire, but it could also be used to describe the company’s future. While the Richmond plant eyes domestic expansion, the plants in California are currently planning to extend their reach further into US markets and also internationally. Dale Young, General Manager of US Operations, puts it this way:

“Our North and South operations share a number of goals, the first of which is to deliver a consistent high quality product to the North American market. Together, we’re also committed to manufacturing here in North America and collaborating to expand our collective presence and customer base.”

Over the last several years, the US plants have been gradually gearing up for anticipated growth. Supporting this plan are innovative new products, enhanced production protocols, and significantly updated manufacturing methods.

Looking back, it’s a good thing the original island the company was founded on was dredged and connected to the shore. Over the years the facility has grown from its humble beginnings in 1964 to a modern manufacturing powerhouse. Somewhat ironically, the sole tree that gave the company its name was removed to make way for some of its initial expansion. The tree may be gone, but while it was there, it clearly was a harbinger of growth and progress, and ultimately sowed the seeds of improvement, achievement and success.
“Tree Island Steel produces enough barbed wire annually to wrap round the world twice.”

Stephen Ogden
VP Operations
Tree Island Steel Facts

• Tree Island Steel is one of North America’s largest producers of steel wire and fabricated products

• Tree Island Steel employs over 400 employees in Canada and the US

• Tree Island Steel has capacity to produce 250 tons of nails per day

• Tree Island Steel is one of the top 100 public companies in British Columbia

• Tree Island Steel operates 4 production mills with a production capacity of over 355,000 tons annually - in weight that is equivalent to 32 Eiffel Towers!

• Tree Island Steel fills and ships over 16,000 orders to our customers around the world every year
“We deliver a consistent high quality product to the North American Market.”

Dale Young
General Manager
US Operations
How are things going now?

Due to steadily increasing demand from US markets, coupled with prudent cost management, volumes and revenues are up. With a product sourcing office in Beijing, the company is constantly looking for ways to increase the value-added mix in its product lines. Tree Island’s main markets extend all the way from Western Canada to California. Business is also growing in Eastern Canada, the Midwest and Eastern United States. Additionally, the company has long-standing customer and partner bases internationally.

The Future and Beyond

What is on the horizon for Tree Island Steel? Company President and CEO, Dale MacLean sums it up like this:

“We can feel the growth momentum in our business carrying forward and I look forward to celebrating more accomplishments on the horizon, our 50 year history, and the return of a reinvigorated TREE ISLAND STEEL to the marketplace. In summary, we are securely anchored, the ship is steady and we are on course to re-establishing Tree Island as the Industry Leader it again deserves to be!”
“We are committed to the success of our customers in everything we produce in our mills.”

Hy Luft
Director of Sales
Specialty Products
Quality Pays Its Way

In 1995, Tree Island Steel was awarded ISO certification. The company prides itself on providing its customers with products that meet or exceed the standard.

Tree Island Mills in Etiwanda, Pomona and Richmond are ISO certified today.
Tree Island produces welded wire mesh for concrete reinforcing all over North America.
Product Diversity

Construction
- Nails and Fasteners
- Stucco Reinforcing
- Concrete Reinforcing

Industrial
- Chain Link Wire
- High Carbon Wire
- Low Carbon Wire
- Galvanized Wire
- Annealed Wire

Agricultural
- Wire Fencing
- Barbed Wire
- Livestock Panels
- Vineyard Wire

Specialty
- Wirelines
- Weaving Wire
- Stainless Steel
- Spring Wire
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