



LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP In 1986, Steven Tomason (left) founded Southwest Companies. His son Michael (right) now serves as president.

Built to Last

Family-run Southwest Companies works to lengthen operating life of NE Ohio facilities

By Lou Kren | Photos courtesy of Southwest Companies

Formed as a commercial painting company in 1986, Southwest Companies has grown and diversified to encompass services for an entire building envelope. Specializing in maintaining and restoring the interior/exterior envelope of facilities, including professional project management and corporate account services, the company's main services include painting, roofing, concrete work and masonry restoration.

Headquartered at 7717 Commerce Park Oval in Independence, Southwest Companies boasts as many as 35 employees during the peak summer season. Crews tackle projects throughout Northeast Ohio, with some work taking the company west to Chicago and east into Pennsylvania.

Protection against harsh weather

Northeast Ohio weather plays havoc with buildings of course, and services offered by Southwest Companies addresses anything that Mother Nature throws our way.

"We are specialists in envelope waterproofing, which protects against a major problem in Northeast Ohio – the freeze-thaw cycle," explains Michael Tomason, president of Southwest Companies. "That cycle breaks up concrete sidewalks as well as brick and block buildings, and also causes leaking windows. Every type of building has similar issues. There are a series of things we can do to prevent these problems from happening or worsening over time. Sealing, caulking, re-tuck-pointing and repairing concrete are just a few services we offer to combat Ohio's

weather and maintain your building's overall appearance and structural integrity. Unfortunately, where we live the freeze-thaw cycle beats everything up."

Benefitting from experience

At 28 years old, Tomason learned the ins and outs of building repair and damage prevention from his father Steve, who founded Southwest Companies and today serves as a director. Steve, in turn, earned his stripes working with his dad.

"My grandfather was a concrete contractor, so my father poured concrete for most of his younger years,"



FINDING A FIX A project for Linde Gas in West Virginia required application of Elastomeric coating to revive an existing metal roof.

Tomasone says. “Grandpa also used to build homes and commercial buildings, so the family brought these experiences into the business and that is how we were able to diversify in the early 2000s and start fixing buildings entirely as a building restoration contractor. Today we have a wealth of versatile knowledge and services. We know how to do roofing, concrete, brickwork and tuckpointing. We took many classes to learn about interior and exterior envelopes of buildings, and how to waterproof and maintain them. Building upkeep and maintenance is more than just a paint job.”

A visit to www.southwestcompanies.net, the company’s website, reveals a laundry list of building-envelope services provided by Southwest Companies. Bonded and insured, the company provides a guarantee on every job.

“With all of our expertise and experience, we are an in-house one-stop shop, so we don’t have to call in six other companies to fix one problem,” Tomasone says.

Keeping buildings in shape

Graduating from the University of Dayton after studying entrepreneurship and operations management, Tomasone is positioning Southwest Companies for continual and incremental growth, he says. And Northeast Ohio should continue to supply opportunities for the company to shine.

“People ask how we are doing, and I tell them that what keeps me in business is our weather,” he says with a

smile. But Tomasone does have serious advice for building owners and managers. “Every building has different, specific needs because every building’s envelope may be different. But the weather has an effect on all buildings. Put together a preventive maintenance schedule so you don’t have costly repairs in the future.”

Southwest Companies strives to maintain and keep buildings together for a longer period of time, Tomasone explains.

“We are not here just to repair, but to make sure that you get your money’s worth out of the investment in maintenance and repair,” he says. “We bring your property back to life by offering cost-effective solutions that will last.” **P**

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