

TOP 100

PRIVATE COMPANIES 2016

Pushing forward

B.R. Kreider family prepares for 5th generation to lead company

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The fourth generation to lead East Hempfield Township-based B.R. Kreider & Son Inc. is already planning for the fifth.

Succession planning in a family-owned business never ends, according to Brent Kreider, who owns the Lancaster County excavating and paving company with his cousins, Heidi Hollinger and Courtney Dougherty.

Since the three of them took over the family business in 2009, one of the steps they have taken is to update the hiring process for future generations.

There is now a list of requirements the next generation will have to meet before being appointed to key positions in the company. Members of the fifth generation, for example, will have to work elsewhere before taking over B.R. Kreider, and they will have to go through the same hiring process as any other employee.

Putting the requirement in writing ensures that “it’s not just a shoe-in,” Hollinger said.

It also makes the hiring process “more intentional,” Kreider added, noting that he and his cousins also worked for other companies before coming back to the family business. Some of their siblings are not involved today.

It’s unclear whether requiring outside work prior to joining B.R. Kreider is good or bad, as the policy hasn’t been officially tested. But the cousins know it comes with risks — there is always the possibility that when their younger relatives go to work for someone else, they won’t want to come back.

“The succession planning process is not easy,” Dougherty said, noting that the time dedicated to succession planning falls outside of her and her peers’ daily roles. Kreider serves as president, Hollinger as the human resource assistant and Dougherty as the operations

assistant.

The company is guided by a fiduciary board, which includes four non-family directors as well as the three family leaders. The outside expertise on the board has been what the cousins described as “invaluable” in guiding the company.

“They push us forward,” Hollinger said.

The company was started by Benjamin R. Kreider in 1936, and he passed it on to his son Elvin. Elvin’s children — two sons, Ken and Jim, and a daughter, Carol Buchen — took over from there. Kreider, Hollinger and Dougherty are their children.

As the generations come and go, the company continues to grow.

It recently expanded services at its Pin Oak Service Center, located alongside company headquarters at 97 Kreider Lane, to offer fleet management for outside companies. Pin Oak is a repair center for cars, trucks, RVs, excavating equipment and trailers.

When it comes to its regular business of excavating and paving, B.R. Kreider is currently working on some big projects in Central Pennsylvania.

In Lancaster County, it is widening Route 72 in Penn Township to make way for a retail center called Penn Towne Center, which will include a new Sheetz gas station.

In Chester County, B.R. Kreider is one of several companies working on a \$90 million revitalization project to update the Main Fountain Garden at Longwood Gardens, which includes building underground tunnels that are 1,400 linear feet. The tunnels will essentially be an underground service system so that Longwood Gardens’ personnel can access the fountains’ infrastructure.

The project, which started in fall 2014, is expected to be complete in fall 2016.

While the projects keep the company’s leaders busy, succession planning is always in the backs of their minds.



Kreider, Hollinger and Dougherty often wonder how it will work when the next generation takes over. Their children range in age from 3 to 17, which shows how generational lines can blur as the years go by.

Kreider, Hollinger and Dougherty are at most 10 years apart, ranging from the early 30s to mid-40s.

“Each transition is different,” Hollinger said. ●

Brent Kreider, president of B.R. Kreider and Son Inc., is part of the fourth generation at the helm of the Lancaster County-based excavating company.

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