



New management team acquires CR Industries

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CUDAHY, Wis. – A trio of investors has acquired CR Industries Inc., a longtime metal fabricating shop in Cudahy.

With the acquisition, the company's name is being changed to CR Industries, LLC. The plant remains at its location at 5757 S. Pennsylvania Ave.

The new owners are industry veteran executives Rich Ballenger and Erik Thompson and equity investor Steve Adkins. Ballenger and Thompson are managing the firm.

Ballenger previously served as president of Cudahy-based Lucas-Milhaupt Inc., where Thompson also served as general manager.

“We were looking for an investment opportunity, and this company checked all of our boxes,” Ballenger said. “It’s in manufacturing, which is what I know. It’s based in southeastern Wisconsin. It has great potential for continued growth. And it has a good corporate culture.”

Ballenger and Thompson are transforming the company into a full-service metal design and fabricating shop with welding, powder coating and packaging capabilities.

The price of the transaction was not disclosed. Ballenger said the company has doubled its annual revenues since 2019. The firm has 45 employees.

CR Industries was acquired from the Weisflog family, led by Clarence Weisflog, who founded the company in 1985.

“We like their story. They take care of their people. They take care of their customers,” Ballenger said. “They align with how Erik and I see the world. We’re blue collar. We have the view that how we treat people matters. They have a lot employees who have been there 15 to 20 years.”

“That existing company culture is key,” Thompson said. “All of the current employees will be retained, and we have growth plans.”

Ballenger and Thompson have embarked on a 90-day “business transformation plan.”

Ballenger and Thompson both have the pedigrees to transform a business. Ballenger achieved a master’s degree in business administration from the Harvard Business School and a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering from the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Thompson, a Pennsylvania native who served in the U.S. military, achieved a master’s degree in business administration from Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School of Business and a bachelor of arts degree in criminal justice and psychology from Dakota Wesleyan University.

“This company will be professionally run. We’re very optimistic about its potential for growth,” Ballenger said.

CR Industries’ product lines include metal point-of-purchase displays. Its customers include Waukesha-based Generac Power Systems Inc. and Brookfield-based Howard Company Inc.

Additional information about the company is available at www.crifabricators.com.