



NAME: Eugene Mancl

TITLE: Senior project manager

COMPANY: Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, LLC (A CoolSys Company)

LOCATION: Wisconsin Rapids, WI

HOMETOWN: Wisconsin Rapids

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION: Thirty

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: Pfizer Inc., and Minerals Technologies Inc.

SCHOOLING: Northcentral Technical College and Fox Valley Technical College

AWARDS/HONORS: Past board member and president of the WPVGA Associate Division

FAMILY: Daughter, Macy, and girlfriend, Denise

HOBBIES: Hunting, fishing, and car restoration

NAME: Greg Johnson

TITLE: Regional service manager

COMPANY: Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning

LOCATION: Wisconsin Rapids

HOMETOWN: Wisconsin Rapids

YEARS IN PRESENT POSITION: 30

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: NASCAR crew chief

SCHOOLING: Mid-State Technical College

FAMILY: Brother, Tim

HOBBIES: Bird hunting and dog training

INTERVIEW

EUGENE MANCL AND GREG JOHNSON

Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, LLC

By Joe Kertzman, managing editor, *Badger Common'Tater*

Founded in 1973 by Ron and Bonnie Mancl, this year marks the 50th anniversary of Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

The company name and family behind it are familiar to Wisconsin potato and vegetable growers and those in neighboring states, with the owners and employees of Ron's Refrigeration having worked alongside area farmers for five decades.

From a time when Ron was running service, bidding projects, and building a customer base alone, the company has steadily progressed until today, when Ron's Refrigeration employs over 40 people and provides engineering, design, service, and installation to customers throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Michigan.

Though Ron and Bonnie are no longer active in the company, their children, Tammy Salewski and Timothy and Eugene Mancl, continue to run the day-to-day operations.

After careful consideration, in 2018, the second generation of Ron's Refrigeration felt it was best to join forces with CoolSys, a nationally known company, to increase the family business's strength and stability into the future.

By joining forces, not only was the second generation of Ron's Refrigeration able to continue running the company, but to also add technicians and gain a larger customer base throughout the United States.

Above: Ron's Refrigeration Senior Project Manager Eugene Mancl (left), whose father and mother, Ron and Bonnie Mancl, founded the company, started doing installs the same year as Regional Sales Manager Greg Johnson (right). The two have been involved in the potato and vegetable industry since their first year and learned a lot from the guys above them and from each other.



As senior project manager of the company, Eugene has been heavily involved in the agricultural industry, serving two terms as president of the WPVGA Associate Division Board of Directors, in 2013 and 2014, and staying involved in many committees.

He opted to share the spotlight this issue with Greg Johnson, regional service manager for Ron's Refrigeration, who answered interview questions with Eugene.

Eugene, your dad's name is in your company name. That must make you proud. What do you most take pride in regarding how Ron's Refrigeration has progressed and grown over the years? When I look at the history of the company, I'm most proud of what our parents built. They literally started with a pickup truck and \$500 in savings. Sometimes it's overwhelming to reflect on where it started and where it is today.

We get a lot of satisfaction knowing, after 50 years, we're still working with some of our same customers and being introduced to their second and third generations.

My brother, Tim, sister, Tammy, and I have been involved in the company since we were young. After college, we all went out and pursued careers in different industries and eventually came back to join our parents years

later to help build Ron's Refrigeration into the company it is today.

I am proud that we still work together. Our parents have retired, but still stop by to check in on us from time to time.

Regarding the 50th anniversary, what do you credit for the longevity and fortitude of the family business?

Our ability to adapt and understand our customers' needs. We have always looked for ways to diversify the company to help us succeed in the event of one industry having an off year or economic decline.

We added electrical a number of years ago, and that has been a great addition to our company.

What was instilled in us, and what holds true today, is that the most important part of a business is the customers and employees.

Greg, you and Eugene joined the company at the same time—in what roles, and how have they changed over the years? We both started doing installs and were involved in the potato and vegetable industry our first year. We learned a lot from

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the guys we worked with, the guys above us and from each other.

From there, we learned service and sprout inhibiting along with refrigeration. Today, I am the regional service manager for the company and Eugene is a senior project manager.

We are both very active in the potato and vegetable side of the company.

Specifically, regarding potato and vegetable growers and storage, what are the main services and products that Ron's Refrigeration provides to farmers in the area? We pride ourselves on being a one-call solution. We design, furnish, install, and service all aspects of equipment for the potato and vegetable industry.

We do the electrical, mechanical, refrigeration, and chemical applications.

What kind of upgrades to storage services and materials have you been able to offer over the past five years or so? What's new in the service industry? We typically do a number of new storages every year along with a number of system remodels to update control panels, humidification, and refrigeration systems.

We recently launched a new panel, IVI Sentinel, which is a more economical version of our top-of-the-line Imperium panel. Currently, we are installing some new high-pressure fogging humidification systems to replace the centrifugal humidifiers previously required for a storage building.

Can you give me specifics on brands, models and what features you consider upgrades? We have been an Industrial Ventilation Inc. (IVI) dealer since the late '70s, making us IVI's longest-running dealer.

Our current panel lineup is an Imperium, which is available in a



Ron's Refrigeration is Industrial Ventilation Inc.'s (IVI's) longest-standing dealer, having been offering IVI control panels and systems since the late 1970's to maintain temperature and humidity in potato and vegetable storage buildings. Ron's Refrigeration recently added the IVI Sentinel panel, which is a more economical version of a top-of-the-line Imperium panel with internet access via phone or app and complete control at the users' fingertips.

number of different configurations to accommodate the system design and customers' needs/requirements.

We recently added the Sentinel panel, which is a slightly scaled-down version with the same internet access and control program as the Imperium and a few less frills to help reduce the price.

I've heard before, and Eugene said it again, that the decisions growers make in the field affect decisions you and they need to make in storage.

What does that mean exactly, and what advice do you have for growers regarding that notion? Disease management is best addressed in the field, and not after harvest.

A lot of changes we are making to current storage systems reflect how the customer intends to use the building. We have added refrigeration to many buildings in recent years as growers are harvesting earlier or holding product longer.

We find a lot of growers are



From left to right, Eugene Mancl, Tyler Jacoby, Daniel Hafstad, and Greg Johnson of Ron's Refrigeration discuss the new Humidicell recently installed in an Okray Family Farms potato storage building as part of a complete remodel. The building was originally built with downflow systems and louvers for intake air, which fell out of favor years ago. As part of the revamp, three new systems feed the same building and include state-of-the-art control panels (IVI Sentinels), Humidicells, refrigeration, and thermal doors for intake air, along with a custom-built high-pressure fogging system for supplemental humidity.

reevaluating the parameters they used when they first constructed the buildings based on changes to their storage requirements.

They are adapting to change, whether it's climate or market, and we are there to help them change the performance of their buildings to meet these requirements.

More than one company has told me that, because of tightening budgets, area potato and vegetable growers aren't building many new storage sheds, but instead upgrading what they have. What kind of upgrades and work can you provide? We have helped design from the ground up, for both electrical and mechanical systems.

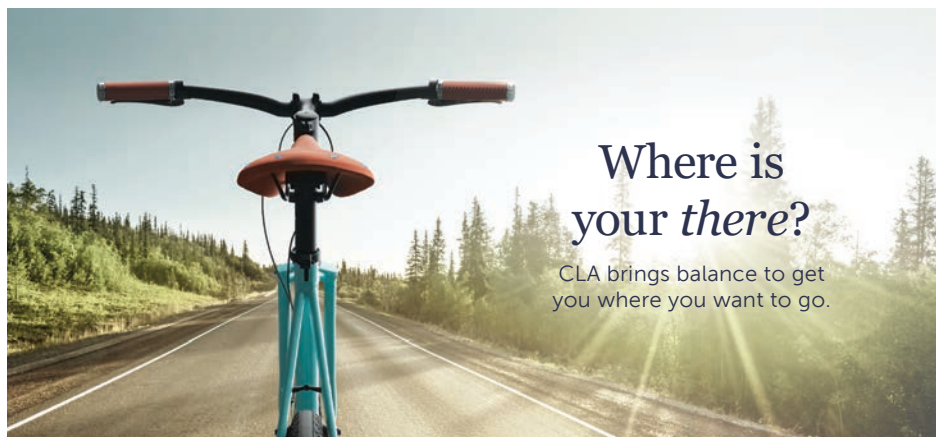
We've increased the performance of air systems along with adding systems such as refrigeration and Humidicells (evaporative humidifiers) to fit within their current structures and budgets.

You're currently remodeling an

Okray Family Farms storage building, and from what I understand, removed an entire side of the building and are adding new units. What kind of units, and what upgrades and remodeling are you doing? The basic structure

of the building needed some minor repairs, and after evaluating their expectations, we decided it was best to remove the whole north side of the building.

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Above: Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Ron's Refrigeration was founded by Ron and Bonnie Mancl, in 1973. Pictured here, Ron and Bonnie have retired but still stop in the office to check in from time to time

There were downflow systems with louvers for intake air, which fell out of favor years ago.

There will be three systems feeding the same building, each having three bins, which will have state-of-the-



“When I look at the history of the company, I’m most proud of what our parents built. They literally started with a pickup truck and \$500 in savings.”

– Eugene Mancl,
Ron's Refrigeration

art control panels (IVI Sentinels), Humidicells, refrigeration, and thermal doors for intake air, along

with a custom-built high-pressure fogging system for supplemental humidity.



Eugene Mancl suggests that growers take time to have their equipment checked and calibrated before the potato storage season.



Above: Ron's Refrigeration has been setting up and manning a booth at the Grower Education Conference & Industry Show in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, for many years. Shown at left in the first two images, Eugene Mancl visits with John E. Bushman (right in the first photo) of Bushman & Associates, and Chris Brooks (right in the second photo) of Central Door Solutions at past shows.

How will this help the Okrays in their storage needs now and in the future? The building will have three separate systems within it, each of them refrigerated independently of each other, along with being connected to their central flume system, allowing them a number of options when grading begins.

When the building is empty, it will be sanitized and used for the farm's incoming seed crop, which allows the Okrays to store at three different temperatures until planting. It's nice that these are smaller, more manageable bins.

Are there products that Ron's Refrigeration markets that others don't, and why are they integral to the growers' storage success? We have a very strong line of in-storage sprout inhibitors that include Amplify and CIPC (Sprout NIP), along with Shield sprout inhibitor, a product used for grading operations.

We also offer ozone generators, which have been a very effective tool for growers for a number of years.

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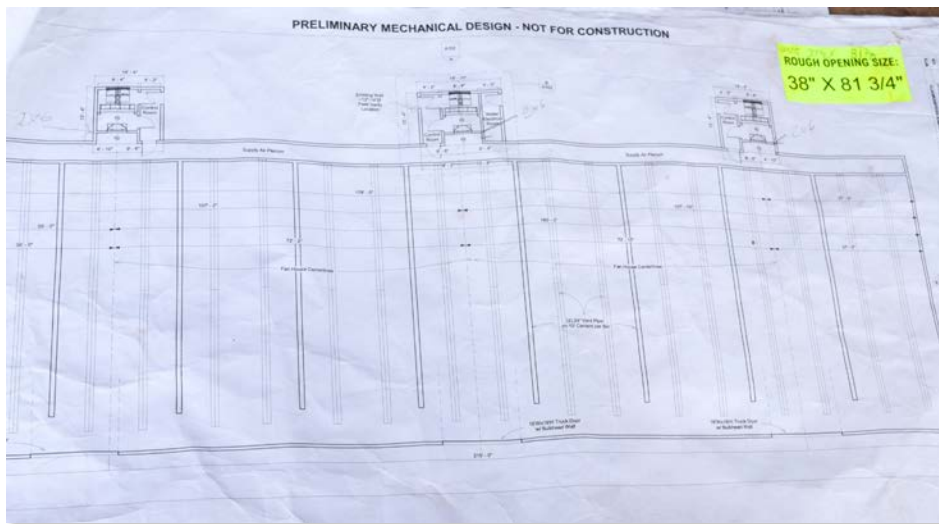
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What do you wish more potato and vegetable growers in Wisconsin knew or would be proactive in doing to help with their storage issues?

We have always been very proactive about pre-season storage checkouts, especially refrigeration systems, to

avoid unnecessary downtime once harvest starts.

If you have an issue with a storage system and, as a result, it doesn't run on an evening when you have cooling available, it's hard to replace that runtime.

Above: Greg Johnson (left) and Eugene Mancl study a blueprint of a potato storage building remodel project that Eugene recently designed for Okray Family Farms.

Are there other large projects besides the Okrays that you're currently working on? We have a number of refrigeration projects along with panel upgrades this season. We are currently working on designs for two new storages for next spring, in addition to normal service-related repairs.

To me, the industry is filled with some incredible people—do you have anything you'd like to share about working with growers and the ag industry in general? Everyone in this industry, from growers to fellow WPVGA Associate Division members, is very easy to communicate with when you are discussing upgrades and changes that will help them store their product better. We are a very close-knit community, have a great Association, and know each other well.

What do you see down the line for potato and vegetable storage in Wisconsin? We see a lot more interest in upgrading older systems and improving the performance of their current storages, instead of building new ones.

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Building costs and material availability have drastically changed over the last few years, and that is affecting everybody.

What do you hope for the future of Ron's Refrigeration, Greg? Eugene and I have worked together for nearly 30 years and look forward to a successful future for Ron's Refrigeration.

We have a strong staff of service and installation technicians and are continually growing our team to meet or exceed customers' needs.

Anything I've missed that you'd like to add? We have always valued our relationships and involvement in this industry, and we look forward to being a part of it for years to come. **BCT**



Ron's Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Inc. received the Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award for 2013. From left to right are Tim Mancl (president of the company), Bonnie Mancl (co-founder), Eugene Mancl (senior project manager), Tammy Mancl-Salewski (vice president), and Ron Mancl (co-founder).

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