



# The Mirror Business Brief

## Kuhlman Corporation Opens New Arrowhead Park Headquarters

BY KRISTI LEIGH  
MIRROR REPORTER

One of the newest buildings to pop up in Arrowhead Park is actually one of the oldest companies in the area.

Kuhlman Corporation, which makes a wide variety of concrete products, has over a century of history behind it. Family-owned and operated since 1901, it has been providing construction materials in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan to this day.

In this area, Kuhlman's products were used to build such well-known places as the Toledo Zoo, Fifth Third Field and the DaimlerChrysler Jeep plant. Kuhlman Corp. also has been involved in the construction of numerous buildings at Owens Community College, Bowling Green State University and The University of Toledo.

Kuhlman was also a factor in the development of Arrowhead Park, where it now resides.

The company received a lot of attention over the past



**Kuhlman Corporation's building has received a lot of attention for its unique design and mixture of textures and colors. Minor construction projects continue on the building, which is located on Indian Wood Circle, near Ford Street.**

few months for the elaborate construction that took place in front of the Paramount building on Indian Wood Circle.

Originally, Paramount was the first building seen when turning onto Indian Wood Circle from Ford

Street. The unique headquarters of Kuhlman Corp. may now steal some of the spotlight.

Terry Schaefer, chief financial officer, said the new location offers a more prominent profile for the company.

"What's interesting is that

where we were before, we had a lot less street traffic," Schaefer said. "Now, Indian Wood Circle has a fair amount of vehicle traffic, so it's interesting that we are getting a lot more looks — that's been nice, to get noticed a little bit more, have more peo-

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ple recognize us."

The company did not move very far, relocating from Beaver Creek Circle just across the street.

Schaefer explained that not many people realized Kuhlman's headquarters was there, because it was not the only company in that building.

Since 1997, Kuhlman Corp. occupied 12,000 square feet of the 50,000-square-foot Beaver Creek Circle building, with tenants occupying the rest.

Kuhlman became involved in Arrowhead in 1997 as somewhat of an investor. The company assisted in the development of Arrowhead Park, with The Andersons leading the way.

"We owned some real estate, we did a couple of tilt-up warehouses out here, and we owned an office building in the park at one time," Schaefer said. "Since we were out here, we owned some land and built the previous building we were in to kind of kick off the Beaver Creek portion of the park here, and that was our main reason for moving out then."

After putting the Beaver Creek location up for sale, Schaefer said they had the opportunity to relocate basically anywhere — but they decided to stay.

"We like this area and we wanted to stay," Schaefer said. "Arrowhead is a great place to work. The surroundings are excellent. For us, we have salespeople in this office who need the convenience of the location of I-475 and US 23 here and even the turnpike, to head in any direction."

Schaefer also thinks the Kuhlman Corporation has a lot to offer Arrowhead Park.

"I think hopefully we've built an attractive building

and a stable company that is a good corporate citizen," he said. "We have a reputation to uphold every day, and we've withstood the test of time. I think we do things right, and I think that Arrowhead benefits from having a good citizen like that."

The new Kuhlman building has expanded to encompass 18,000 square feet. Most of the expansion is devoted to the training room and a showroom to display its products, including bricks, in all different shapes, sizes and colors, and concrete flooring, walls and even table tops, in a variety of patterns, textures and colors.

"It was a nice opportunity to say, 'What would we do differently?' and here we said we wanted to highlight our product a lot more, and also have a bigger training room so we could do more seminars, more education for our customers and the market we serve," Schaefer said. "We tried to show what you could potentially do with the product through our building."

"People will come in and say, 'I love this arch,' 'I love that wall,' 'I love this floor.' Those are three different things that are very distinct, that are all our products. If you see the wood plank design here, you might say, 'I want that on my back patio.'"

The new Kuhlman Corporation building, which was designed with the help of

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# Kuhlman Corp. Moves Base Of Operations

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SSOE, utilized almost exclusively its own products. Kuhlman also employed contractors for whom it supplies materials at the new location.

The end result showcases the many different things that can be done with a building by using concrete.

“It is interesting, because some people think of concrete as a gray drab material. Well, this is to highlight that it is not that,” Schaefer said. “Here are the possibilities you can achieve with it — it’s endless.”

In this instance, Schaefer was referring to the flooring, which makes quite an impression as one first walks inside. It has almost a marble look to it, but contains bright yellow and orange hues. Areas of bright navy blue and teal mimic the beams of the build-

ing up above.

Schaefer elaborated on the ready-mix concrete for which Kuhlman is well known, and which was incorporated into much of the new building.

“Ready-mix concrete is interesting because sometimes the general public will use the terminology cement. (For example), they’ll say, ‘There’s a cement mixer’ or something like that. Well, cement is one of the raw materials that go into concrete.

“Concrete’s basic ingredients are cement, sand, stone and water, and generally every mix has them. There are different types of mix, and the best analogy is comparing it to baking something, where you’re mixing different things in different proportions. That is how it is with concrete — you can get different per-

formance, different strengths and you can get different stamps and different colors.”

Schaefer then pointed outside of the building where there are concrete squares of all different motifs: a wood grain, a bolder and pebble designs, an iridescent colorful, textured pattern, and more.

“That’s what we tried to highlight in this building — our product a lot more,” he said.

Other areas of interest are the tabletops and the walls. Made of a chiseled-looking concrete and covered with a virtually indestructible polyurethane, the tables look very modern. Distinctively designed walls were made to work well with the shadows cast by the skylights.

According to Schaefer, many Arrowhead Park professionals have seen the building go up and have come by to take a look. Schaefer said the company plans to have an open house in the near future.

“You wouldn’t want anyone in your house if everything was not just right,” he said grinning, “There are just little things we want to finish up — we like to do things right.”

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# Kuhlman Corp. CFO Shares Insight Into Company's Past, Present And Future

BY KRISTI LEIGH  
MIRROR REPORTER

Terry Schaefer has been with Kuhlman Corporation for 12 years, serving for the past nine as chief financial officer and one of three vice presidents at the company.

**Mirror:** How is it that you started working for the Kuhlman Corporation?

**Schaefer:** I was in public accounting previous to here, and my predecessor (Richard Cothorn) was with the company for a long time, nearly 30 years. I had known (him) both professionally and personally and knew of his (retirement) plans, so I contacted the company when I was aware that he was looking for a replacement."

**Mirror:** What does your career position ask of you and what is a typical day like?

**Schaefer:** It can change from day to day. As a general overview, I am in charge of the accounting functions of the company, the administration matters and our management information systems as well as the finance/treasury functions of the company, which includes credit. I oversee the investing and the borrowings.

**Mirror:** Tell me briefly how Kuhlman Corporation has evolved over the years.

**Schaefer:** We started in 1901, so you have to think back, in 1901 there weren't even trucks that could deliver. We got into the delivery business really about 1928, so that's one development.

When we had our centennial, one of our vendors reminded us that our business started before the Wright brothers had even left ground, so obviously our business has evolved over the years as different things.

At one time in Northwest Ohio we had a lot of yards — a yard is where we distribute our product — but once the interstate system came in, getting around town was a lot easier.

We have a product that has, let's say, expiration. In ready-mix concrete, you can't carry it in your truck for a couple of hours; you have to be able to get to the job and have a turnaround quickly, so it's still crucial that you're close to where the job activity is.

It evolved here. (Now) our main yard is off I-75 on Kuhlman Drive and it's a great axis point. You can get to places quicker than trying to drive through city streets. <sup>a</sup> You have less physical locations, more streamlined, more convenient than the number of locations we had at one time.

**Mirror:** Where was Kuhlman Corp. located before its overall involvement in Arrowhead Park?



Vice president Terry Schaefer (left) and president Tim Goligoski, of Kuhlman Corporation, stand by the sign outside of the Kuhlman headquarters, located at 1845 Indian Wood Circle.

MIRROR PHOTO BY KRISTI LEIGH

**Schaefer:** It was on Collingwood, in the Old West End. We were there for about 40 years.

**Mirror:** Please tell me a little about your CEO.

**Schaefer:** Our CEO is Tim Goligoski. He has been with the company or affiliated companies since around 1981. He has been CEO/president since 1987, prior to my joining.

His wife would be the great-granddaughter of our founder, Adam Kuhlman.

**Mirror:** How is Kuhlman Corp. organized?

Tim Goligoski is our president and CEO. Ken Kuhlman is the vice president in charge of sales, and Ken would also be a great-grandson of our founder. Jim Gilmore is the vice president in charge of operations, and then myself, so you've got three VPs, and then we have a lot of our different businesses that have general managers and day-to-day operators.

**Mirror:** How were current company officers placed? Were they elected?

**Schaefer:** Ultimately, the officers of the company are appointed by the board of directors. The shareholders elect the board of directors. We're privately held by individuals (the private shareholders.)

**Mirror:** Are there any plans to ever have the company go public?

**Schaefer:** No, not at this time. <sup>a</sup> I'm not a shareholder, so I wouldn't really be able to say why, but it's up to the private shareholders, they are the owners. We've been fortunate that our shareholders aren't necessarily looking to sell. You know, I don't know that going public would even make sense.

Most (of the shareholders) are family-related. <sup>a</sup> In the past we've had a couple who were long-term employees. The vast majority, about 85 percent of our sharehold-

ers, are descendents of our founder. We have approximately 25 shareholders."

**Mirror:** How many employees do you now have?

**Schaefer:** We're somewhat seasonal. Our peak hiring is summer and our winter period is when construction activity slows down. We generally have always said 150. That is generally the average number of employees at Kuhlman's.

The biggest demands we have in the summer are for drivers — you need a commercial driver's license to drive a ready-mix truck."

**Mirror:** What do you offer your employees? Are there any profit sharing programs in force?

**Schaefer:** We've had incentive compensation programs in place for a number of years. We have different programs based on location, and we have union employees and non-union, too. The terms of the Union employees' contracts are independently negotiated. For the

non-unions, we fund incentive compensation for them based on the operating results of the company, based on our annual performance.

**Mirror:** What are the market areas you now serve?

**Schaefer:** It varies a little on product lines, where we are at, but our main focus is in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. We have concrete plants here and in Monroe and Adrian, Mich.

We have two portable plants that go on site, depending on the size of the job. We have one out near the Jeep plant right now, and we have one out near I-280 and the turnpike. We have yards, one out on Reynolds Road, we have the Kuhlman Drive yard, and we have the one in a suburb of Akron. In Tecumseh, Mich., we have a sand and gravel operation.

**Mirror:** What would you say is the biggest thing that sets you apart from your competitors?

**Schaefer:** We really stress our quality and service. Kuhlman has been around for so long because we're going to do things right and do it the first time. I think we offer quality products, we have the technical expertise, and we're going to service the job."

**Mirror:** Where do you get your materials?

**Schaefer:** It depends again on the plant and other

factors, but we have a sand and gravel pit up in Tecumseh, which supplies our Michigan yards, but then we also bring concrete sand across by a lake freighter from Smelder Bay, Canada, and we also truck some sand in.

**Mirror:** There has been a boom in the price of concrete. Has Kuhlman's been feeling this? Where is the demand coming from?

**Schaefer:** We've had significant increases in cement pricing (related to an overall price increase of raw materials), and then also with us being a delivery business, fuel pricing has affected us greatly. So it's probably less demand than it is costs, trying to keep up with those."

**Mirror:** What other materials does Kuhlman's work with besides concrete? Anything new?

**Schaefer:** The stamped and colored concrete has gotten more and more popular for the last five years. It really seems to be gaining a lot of interest, so even though that's a product we've done for years, that area is a lot more popular.

It attracts both the general public and contractors, because the demand is there. We've done a wood look with concrete at some of the Metroparks. There's a walkway over at Wildwood that kind of looks like a plank boardwalk, but it is really stamped concrete."



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