

AMERICAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY

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RECOVERY-ACT CONSTRUCTION

How you can use the ARRA to benefit your business, and how it's changing the future of construction

ACTIVE-ADULT COMMUNITIES

The upward trend that's redefining the senior-housing industry

CRITERION PROPERTY COMPANY, L.P.

Developer showcases its honed vision for carving properties into compelling, aspirational-lifestyle communities



Pool Tech Midwest installed the filtration and chemical equipment in this competition pool at the Quest Center in Omaha, NE, which was used for the 2008 Olympic time trials.

POOL TECH MIDWEST, INC.

Second-generation pool installer executes unparalleled work on public and private projects

BY SANDRA GUY

RICK WHITEAKER PRACTICALLY GREW UP IN A SWIMMING pool. So it's no surprise that Whiteaker, who started swimming competitively at age nine and recounts eight-hour daily practices, succeeded his father, Dick, as head of Pool Tech Midwest, Inc., based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"My two sisters, older brother, and I all worked our way through the business," says Rick, president. "I started out doing vacuuming work and after-care for pools. In college, I worked as a foreman leading construction crews building pools."

Even founder Dick Whiteaker's opportunity to enter the pool-building business started poolside. Dick, now 83, got to know the owner of a construction company while he attended his children's swim meets. "The owner of the company wanted to focus on roofing, so he offered the pool division of his company to my dad," Rick recalls. "My dad developed the company into what it is today."

When Dick started Pool Tech Midwest in 1973, his wife, Betty, now 78, kept the books. After college, Rick went off to build tall buildings, including helping in the

construction of the 52-story First Bank Place in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Rick, now 52, eventually accepted his father's offer to return to the business, and took over as president in 1994. His philosophy of innovative water design has little to do with the traditional notion of placing concrete, though that skill is honed expertly at Pool Tech Midwest.

Pool Tech Midwest has gained a national reputation for quality in both of its specialty areas: commercial projects within a 300-mile radius of Cedar Rapids, and

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA

2009 REVENUE:
\$5 MILLION+

EMPLOYEES:
35+

AREA OF SPECIALTY:
PUBLIC- AND
PRIVATE-POOL
INSTALLATION



This freeform pool and elevated spa with a waterfall brings a resort atmosphere to the Isle of Capri Casino and Hotel in Waterloo, Iowa.

residential projects within an 80-mile radius. It also runs a retail business that services the water systems that the company creates.

Pool Tech Midwest is one of a select few distributors in the Midwest of Myrtha Pools, and is the only Iowa-based member of the by-invitation-only Masters Pool Guild, a highly regarded recognition of its expertise, work quality, and skills. Though the uninitiated may think that few people want pools in the Midwest, the use of autocovers keeps pool-water temperatures warm and can ensure a Midwestern pool season that extends from April until late October, depending on the length of warm weather into fall.

Rick sees his work as creating a lifestyle, and bringing a person's ideas and visions to fulfillment. "How would you like to enjoy your environment, or what vision do you have for this project, and how would you like water to be a part of that?" he asks.

The company also builds complex aquatic facilities that involve the latest in theme-park-like technology to create unique, peaceful, and impressive environments. It uses an

integrated approach to ease use and minimize the worries of operating a pool environment.

For example, the company may install a backyard pool with an automatic chemical-feeding system that regulates the amount of chemicals put into the water, and a remotely monitored and controlled hot tub in the spa area that can be set for a romantic evening with dimmed lights and the right water temperature. "We do a systems approach," Rick says. "We combine the talents of our strategic partners, such as Siemens, Arch Chemicals, and ETS UV Systems, to increase the [project's] benefits."

Pool Tech Midwest works toward the customer's vision in the residential and commercial marketplaces, including municipal, therapeutic (hospitals and wellness centers), and hotels, motels, and health clubs.

The common thread that ties Pool Tech Midwest's myriad projects together is its valued workforce and the clientele it serves. "We're fortunate that we have very good people who work with us, and we get to collaborate with clients who've gotten to a place in life where they can afford to add to the quality of their living," Whiteaker says. ABQ

POOL TECH MIDWEST, INC.'S NOTABLE PROJECTS

- A \$1 million YMCA project in South Sioux City, Iowa, in 2007–2008 that involved installing an indoor spa, a pool for swim meets, and a leisure-concept pool with water toys for children.
- A \$900,000 athletic-club project in Rochester, Minnesota, which has both indoor and outdoor bodies of water, including two indoor pools, three spas, and a leisure-concept pool with a slide.
- A \$400,000 hospital complex for Alegent Health in Omaha, Nebraska, with therapy pools and a large spa for the wellness center.
- Assisting with hydraulic- and filtration-equipment work in setting up the Myrtha competition and practice pools for the Olympic time trials in Omaha, in 2008.
- An \$800,000–900,000 residential project (pictured below) in which the backyard of a home in Cedar Rapids was terraced to look like a Colorado backdrop, complete with a pool house, an outdoor kitchen, 900 tons of boulders, and a terraced slope to access the pool from the house, which eventually led to backyard access to the Cedar River.



- A 20-by-75-foot pool in the backyard of a Hamilton, Illinois home, with a 75-foot vanishing edge and a 5-foot drop so that water can run into a trough below yet give the appearance of running into the Mississippi River. The project also involved building a 10-person spa at the home, which featured imported marble, hand-blown glass chandeliers, and other exotic artistic features.

35 years of innovative aquatic development partnerships



POOL TECH
MIDWEST INC
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Schimberg Co. would like to congratulate Pool Tech on all of their accomplishments and wish them success in the future.

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