

110 *years*



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Hooper poises itself for the future and stays focused on the people

Hooper Corporation has been regarded as a trusted electrical and mechanical contractor, founded over 110 years ago. In the early days, the company installed heating pipes at the University of Wisconsin and state government buildings in Madison. Recently, it strengthened its ties to Wisconsin a century later with a state-of-the-art corporate headquarters in DeForest. Though the company's heart is in Wisconsin, its arms reach out to residential and commercial customers in Colorado, Florida and Ohio with a breadth of professional services.

"Back in 1913, we started in Madison working on the steam tunnels in the Capitol. From there we evolved into many different services. Our breadth of services now includes plumbing, steam fitting, HVAC work, fire protection and custom metals. In the '40's, when the Rural Electrification Administration started, we got into high voltage electrical work and have done that since. Our organization has grown and spread its geographical reach, and services have changed tremendously since our start," Hooper CEO Steve Lindley noted.

Like most companies during the Great Depression, Hooper's earliest challenge was finding consistent work. Crews had to leave the state to find work on government military bases and other projects, Lindley said. The company also performed numerous acquisitions over



the years, with one notable addition being the General Heating and Air Conditioning (GHAC) company in 1994.

Hooper's latest and greatest achievement included uniting GHAC with Hooper under one cohesive brand and moving into the DeForest campus in 2021, which poises the company for the future, Lindley said.

"We did a lot of things to build a platform for the next 110 years. Our biggest achievements were those things: Taking the company and bringing it all under one roof and creating a new, state-of-the-art facility for ourselves," Lindley added.

The company completed the move to its new headquarters in 2022. The 50-acre campus includes office space, parking and a fabrication facility to balance welcoming woodland aesthetics

with productivity of an in-house fabrication building. A 60-well geothermal bore field, in-floor heating, in-ground snow melting systems and a water-cooled modular chiller helps the company showcase its professional abilities within its own walls.

The features of Hooper's headquarters reflect its specialties in plumbing, HVAC, fire protection and more in the field. Such projects include the Overture Center, UW Health at the American Center and Camp Randall Stadium. When Hurricanes Ida and Sandy struck in the South and the East Coast, Hooper crews dealt with fallen trees, hot and humid temperatures, mud and debris to restore power for countless residents.

Lindley said his company's success came from focusing on relationships with employees and customers. He said the company will continue to



grow when it creates a culture, and a place where people want to be.

“It’s somewhat cliché to say, ‘It’s all about the people,’ but it’s absolutely true. To me, it’s making sure we create a culture at Hooper where people want to be. If we make this a welcoming culture and embrace everyone that works here and provide them with a good place to work, give them tools and training they need to excel in their careers and feel good about what they’re doing, then that’s going to attract talent. That’s going to bode well for the future.”

The company credits its growth to its unique ownership structure and the people who work at the company. Hooper has been a union business since it started and employed the best and brightest of skilled tradespeople, company officials noted. The company has held true to its core values since 1913, upholding standards of hard work, honesty and excellence to guide the company into the next century.

“That’s what we’re going to build the future out of. Not just in leadership talent, but talent in every facet of our business. We’re going to attract good people to do really good work,” Lindley said.

Hooper is forecasted for continued growth, not because of the cycles of the stock market but because of the company’s commitment to its customers, Lindley said.

“I think we’re going to continue to grow. We’re not forced to grow because we’re not publicly traded. We’re going to continue to build strong relationships with our customers. We’ve been fortunate to see good economic times, and there’s a lot of construction work out there and we’ve been active in that market. We want to be innovative and bring in good talent as well. If we do all those things, then the future for us is bright,”

Lindley said.

Without outside shareholders and a unique ownership structure, Hooper takes pride in its growth and succession over multiple generations of owner-operators. Lindley said the company’s branding process and core values for safety, community and collaboration are what sets it apart from other companies.

Instead of focusing on what competitors are up to, the company president said they focus on their core values and people.

“If we’re good at what we do, and we look at our core values, it’s safety, quality craftsmanship, community and collaboration. If we live those core values and take care of people around us, like family, friends, employees and customers and treat them how you want to be treated. If you make your decisions based on those things, good things happen,” Lindley said.

Hooper has won multiple awards over the last couple of years, including the 2022 Charitable Organization of the Year from The Daily Reporter,

the 2022 BUILD Wisconsin Award from AGC of Wisconsin and the 2022 Patriot of the Year Award from the U.S. Department of Defense.

True to its people-centric philosophy, Hooper is active in philanthropy and volunteering. The Hooper’s Heroes program recognizes ordinary employees who do extraordinary things, like taking part in hurricane cleanup efforts or introducing girls to engineering at the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County. Hooper will match up to \$500 when an employee donates to a charity or nonprofit of their choice with the Employee Match Program.

In May, the company will receive a Torch Award from the Better Business Bureau for meeting the highest standard of trust and ethics among their employees, customers and local communities.

The company’s charitable organization, Hooper Foundation, gives funding to 501(c)3 organizations across the U.S. and processes requests for contributions each quarter.

