California Drywall Co.

by Greg Eckstrom, Vice President

In 1946, my grandfather Leonard Eckstrom was selling for USG. In a bold pioneering move for the industry at the time, he took a great leap forward to start a company specializing in drywall.

California Drywall was founded that year in the Santa Clara Valley, installing and finishing drywall for residential properties.

Our company has been in business now for almost 70 years, and it remains a family business. The third generation is at the helm, and we now have at least three fourth-generation family members working at the company. With our principals of quality, service and value, and our commitment to exceed our customers' expectations, the company has not only survived but thrived and achieved many accomplishments in the industry.

While we started with framing and drywall, our services have grown to include lath and plaster, fireproofing, and acoustical and specialty ceilings. We are also one of the top technical builders in the region and the country. We believe in making use of evolving technology. We bring significant design-assist and design-build capabilities to our clients' projects. By leveraging our in-house engineering, BIM, preconstruction and construction expertise, we are able to make the best decisions in the design and construction phases of our projects.

We run 400 to 500 men in the field and have more than 50 in the office and field supervision. Our work is performed throughout Northern California, including Monterey Bay and the Central Valley.

As large and successful as we are, business has been a challenge for the past five years or so. The downturn in 2007 hit everyone in our industry hard. While it wasn't pleasant, we looked at the downturn as an opportunity to improve and strengthen our organization and operations. With the construction economy recovering, there's a nice rebound happening, which is opening up a lot of opportunities.

We cultivate an entrepreneurial, collaborative environment where people are allowed to grow and contribute, no matter what their position is within the company. Our culture encourages communication, collaboration, and embracing new technology and change. We pride ourselves in the fact that many of our estimators and project managers started in the field with us and have grown into some of the best professionals in the industry.

Our commitment to our people, our clients and a quality product is what we believe sets us apart. This commitment to employees extends to a safe work environment both for our employees and those we work alongside. Safety is a value, not an objective for us. We want each employee to go home safe at the end of each workday. Our industry leading EMR of 0.40 is just one indication of our follow-through on this value.

Strong client relationships are also part of who we are. Since our beginning in 1946, California Drywall has taken pride in developing strong partnerships and earning the trust of our clients. These key principles guide our efforts.

One current project we're bringing these strengths to — and it's my great pleasure to say this — is the new San Francisco 49ers stadium in Santa Clara. It will be 1.8 million square feet, with 68,000 seats, including 165 luxury suites.

Our non-drywall divisions are also taking off, demonstrating our outstanding abilities in these areas as well. We're the ACT contractor for the new Santa Clara Family Justice Center, are fireproofing the new air traffic control tower at San Francisco International Airport, and have about 20 different projects underway in our plaster division.

We value WACA for the many benefits it's brought us in such a short period. The networking opportunities, industry news and continuing education that WACA offers have helped our staff members to expand their professional horizons, which in turn helps us as an organization. From a company standpoint, while we compete with our competitors ferociously to bid and win projects, WACA is our advocate on the common issues that affect all of us, including labor relations, government advocacy, coordinating efforts with other trades and technical assistance. This support is invaluable.

I'm proud to note a few of our recent accomplishments below:

- Recipient of the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry (AWCI) Excellence in Construction Quality Award. This national award recognizes a wall and ceiling contractor for excellence in construction quality for complicated and challenging projects. We've received this particular award twice in three years. In 2012, California Drywall won it for the Nokia R&D Center for Excellence project in Sunnyvale.
- Recipient of *Engineering News Record* (*ENR*) magazine's Best of the Best – Specialty Subcontracting award. The national honorees were selected from regional winners of McGraw Hill Construction's network of regional publications. Nearly 700 projects were submitted for regional awards, yielding 166 regional winners, from which the panel chose Best of the Best in 19 categories.
- Golden Gate Partner Recognition by CAL/OSHA, which recognized California Drywall's efforts in implementing and maintaining an effective injury and illness prevention program at the Foundry Square III project.
- 2013 Construction Excellence Award for Best Institutional Exterior, Best Institutional Interior and Project of the Year, both Interior and Exterior, by the Wall And Ceiling Alliance (WACA).

I would like to congratulate and thank every employee at California Drywall for helping us achieve all of our accomplishments. I'm looking forward to seeing what we achieve next!