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Wednesday, 13 February 2013 17:50

With John A. Mellowes stepping down at helm of steel company, sons ready to assume leadership

Charter Manufacturing Co., a privately owned producer of steel components with corporate offices in Mequon, has announced that John A. Mellowes will step down as chairman and chief executive officer in July.

Mellowes has worked at the company for 48 years and been at the helm since 1993. He is the grandson of the company's founder, Alfred Mellowes, and will remain on Charter's board of directors as chairman emeritus.

Even with the retirement, the family line of succession will remain intact.

Son John W. Mellowes, current vice president and general manager of the company's Charter Steel division, will become CEO of Charter Manufacturing.

His brother Charles A. Mellowes will become Charter Manufacturing's board chairman and maintain his current responsibilities as vice president of strategic planning and business development.

Tom Glaister will continue as the company's president and chief operating officer.

John A. Mellowes followed his father, Charles N. Mellows, into the company.

“The time is right to move to the next generation of family leadership at Charter Manufacturing, and this sibling partnership positions us to be a stronger, better company with a solid record of accomplishment and an unwavering will to grow,” John A. Mellowes said in the company’s announcement of the transition plan.

“This is a significant milestone for our family-owned company, and I am confident that the fourth generation of Mellowes leadership will be Charter’s best. I also could not be more proud of both of them.”

John W. Mellowes said the transition plan has been in place for some time and is intended to be as seamless as possible.

“The heritage of our family-owned company is built on the principles of forward thinking, leadership and respect for people,” he said.

“My brother and I share a strong commitment to continuing Charter’s culture, solid values and high standards. To that end, nothing will change.”

Charles A. Mellowes commented on the family traditions that are entrenched in the company’s history.

“As we take on roles once held by our father, grandfather and great-grandfather, we feel a strong sense of responsibility, of history and of accountability to our customers, employees and everyone who works with Charter,” he said.

The transition plan has been approved by the company’s board of directors and goes into effect July 26.

The succession announcement came less than two months after Charter Manufacturing acquired Dura-Bar and Dura-Bar Metal Services as part of its stock purchase of Illinois-based Wells Manufacturing Co.

That acquisition adds a fourth division to Charter operations — along with Saukville’s Charter Steel, Charter Wire and Charter Automotive.

According to the company, Charter Steel, with its primary production plant located in Saukville, is a leading American supplier of carbon and alloy steel bar, rod and wire products; Charter Wire, based in Milwaukee, is a leading supplier of cold finish bar, cold-rolled steel, flat wire and wire coil products; and Charter Automotive, with plants in Milwaukee, the United Kingdom and China, is a supplier of engineered components and assemblies for the automotive industry.

The company reported annual sales of approximately $1.2 billion. It operates 10 plants and has nearly 2,000 employees worldwide.

Image Information: CHARTER MANUFACTURING CHAIRMAN and CEO John A. Mellowes (center) will be stepping down from his day-to-day duties with the company as his sons Charles (left) and John W. take on top leadership roles. Photo courtesy of Charter Manufacturing