

Company notes 50-year Fort Dodge presence

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Sunderman Farm Management has been serving its clients in different facets of the agricultural consulting for 50 years.

On Tuesday the company celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Fort Dodge Area Chamber of Commerce.

Sunderman Farm Management was started in 1961 by Roger and Lyda Sunderman. Roger ran the company by himself for a few years before Lyda stepped down as a principal at the Badger Elementary School.

Their one and only employee, Brian Larson, joined the company in March 1969. He became the owner 20 years ago.

"Roger and Lyda were like parents to me," said Larson. "I was their only employee before he sold the company to me."

Larson is joined by his brother, Jon Larson; his son, Brent; Mark Thompson and office manager Julie Hambleton.

The company offers professional farm management, farm real estate sales including farmland and farm acreages and agricultural consulting services, with farms in Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. The majority of the farms are located in north central and north western Iowa.

"We have a great team of people and I am real fortunate to have wonderful people working for me," Brian Larson said.

The three Larsons and Thompson also farm. Brian Larson said "We know and understand farming and we think that helps with the relationship with our clients."

Brent Larson said they often attend various agricultural seminars and are up to speed on the latest equipment, farming practices and other agronomic practices used.

"We are unique that way, and we always try to be as fair as possible," said Brian Larson.

Most of the clients served by Sunderman Farm Management become more than just customers to the employees as many times friendships are developed throughout the years.

"We are all about trying to provide the best service we can," said Brent Larson. "We rarely lose clients. Our client retention numbers are high. Clients become (as) friends and are like family to us.

"It's more of a friendship than a client relationship."

The company, at 1309 First Ave. S., Suite 5, purchased the Bel-Aire building a few years ago. The structure was completely remodeled. Employees moved officially on April 30, 2009.

The company is planning on adding a new parking lot to the office building this spring or summer.

In addition to updating office space, the company is also working on updating its image, Brent Larson said, by keeping uniform with letterheads, signage and keeping up on their website, which is kept up-to-date with the help of Brent Larson's wife, Christine.