

BUSINESS

LOCAL BUSINESS

Family expands recycling business

Middletown-based company adds plastics, electronics.

By Chelsey Levingston
Staff Writer

MIDDLETOWN – Cohen is re-branding itself as a recycling company.

Middletown-based Cohen is best known as the largest scrap metal processor in the Cincinnati region.

But scrap yards and the scrap industry have gotten a bad rap in recent years due to rising metal thefts. Cohen officials want to set their company apart by highlighting that their business is really recycling. It has a positive impact on the environment, said Adam Dumes, a member of the family that owns Cohen and one of its managers.

Cohen's business keeps material out of a landfill that's recyclable, Dumes said.

"We have always been a scrap metal recycler," he said. "Our business is recycling. We're taking old product and we're turning it around to make new product."

The fourth generation family-run business mainly recycles metal including copper, brass, aluminum and steel, as well as automobiles. Cohen also started recycling electronics in 2010. It can recycle different grades of paper and plastic.

The company now does business as "Cohen" or "Cohen Recycling." It was formerly known as Cohen Brothers.

Brothers Ken and Neil are the third generation. Their grandfather Mose started the business with his brother Phil in 1924. Neil and Ken's father Wilbur, 90, is chairman and chief executive officer of Cohen.

Dumes is Ken and Neil's nephew. He and his cousins Jill Cohen (Neil's daughter) and Andy Cohen (Ken's son) make up the fourth generation.

Cohen accumulates and processes various material into batches of like product – cutting it to size or densifying it – to the point it can be shipped to a mill and used as a raw material to make a new product, President Ken Cohen said.

Customers from whom Cohen buys scrap material consist of manufacturers, contractors, the demolition industry, electricians, plumbers, small machine shops and individuals.

Consumers who buy processed material from Cohen include steel mills and foundries.

Cohen's headquarters and main processing facility are located on Woodlawn Avenue in Middletown.

There are also 20 satellite locations in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio including Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Springfield. Additionally, Cohen has the joint venture Cumberland Scrap Processors in Russellville, Ky.

Cohen's various sites process more than 1.25 million tons of material a year.

The Butler County recycling company is listed as the tristate's 17th largest private-



(From left) Ken Cohen, Andy Cohen, Adam Dumes and Neil Cohen have expanded Cohen Recycling to handle plastics and electronics as well as scrap metal. NICK DAGGY / STAFF

COHEN

What: Recycles scrap metal, electronics and automobile parts
Headquarters: 1723 Woodlawn Ave., Middletown; 20 satellite recycling centers and other locations in Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky
Chairman and chief executive officer: Wilbur Cohen
President: Ken Cohen
Secretary: Neil Cohen
Website: www.cohenusa.com
Revenues: \$568 million in 2011
Employees: 500

ly-held company for generating \$568 million in revenues in 2011, according to the Deloitte Cincinnati USA 100 annual ranking.

Cohen has been in the process of rebranding since 2011, Dumes said.

The changes mean the company is investing in new equipment to process more material, and more varieties of material, in more locations, they said. It also means they've been gradually hiring more people to do that.

Cohen employs approximately 500 workers, Ken said.

In the last year, Cohen also changed the names of its 20 recycling centers and other locations to all include the family name, Dumes said. For example, the names of its Hamilton and Middletown locations are now "Cohen Hamilton" and "Cohen Middletown." Before, the Hamilton location was named Hamilton Scrap Processors, for example.

Signage, advertising and letterhead have changed to bear the name "Cohen."

"We're really not a scrap metal company anymore," Ken said.

"We're a recycling company and we're recycling all different grades of material from scrap metal to electronics to automobiles, certain grades of paper, certain grades of plastic," Ken said.

Cohen operates within a 150-mile radius of Middletown. The market is saturated with competitors, Ken said.

"We have competition everywhere so we're competing for the product," Ken said. The company was rebranded the way it is because "we want those people to come to us."

"Once the saturation point is

reached, the amount of the investment to go in and take business away from other people doesn't justify the cost of doing that, which is the reason why we've moved into different product lines because with the saturation that we have, the different product lines add volume and add activity to our existing locations and allow those individual locations to grow," Ken said.

The move to be a broader recycling company and not just a scrap metal company sets them apart, Neil Cohen said.

"We want to be doing things that other people aren't doing. We want to brand ourselves in a different way. We want to make the customer experience special, something somebody wants to continue to do," Neil said.

"We want them to be greeted by somebody and we want them to be able to drive through a clean facility. We want them to get the help that they need and feel like they had a good experience when they leave," Neil said. "Those are the kinds of things that we think make us unique."

Also, the new focus on recycling broadens Cohen's customer base. Electronics, for example, is one material that appeals to all demographics, Dumes said.

Cohen in 2012 received third-party R2 Solutions certification for responsible e-waste recycling practices.

"Only certain people have truckloads of scrap metal. Only certain industries or manufacturing plants generate scrap metal," Dumes said.

"But every business and every individual has obsolete electronics or will have at some point," he said.

Small businesses shun tax credit

Incentive not enough to offer health insurance, one expert says.

By Ben Sutherly
The Columbus Dispatch

Plenty of publicity has focused on Ohioans who soon will buy coverage directly from health insurers on a new online, federally run exchange.

But there's another government-run health insurance exchange, one that will offer tax credits to small Ohio businesses as an incentive to cover their workers. It's drawn scant interest so far from small firms who don't already offer coverage.

Some observers say it might stay that way.

That's because companies that would receive the biggest tax credits – those with fewer than the equivalent of 10 full-time workers whose wages average less than \$25,000 – often have little incentive to offer coverage.

There is no requirement that they do so. And in many cases, their workers would have lower out-of-pocket costs by shopping the individual exchange and qualifying for premium assistance from the government, said Tom Paplaczky of Strategic Business Services Agency in Dublin. Paplaczky, who has reviewed premium rates cleared by the Ohio Department of Insurance for the exchange, said the tax credit isn't enough to make businesses act.

"That incentive is more than offset by the fact that those same people will get a bigger subsidy by buying the coverage on their own," he said.

Still, Paplaczky said, the tax credit might keep some small employers from dropping coverage.

The 2014 tax credit will be cover as much as 50 percent of premium costs for small firms

and 35 percent for small tax-exempt employers such as charities. It will be available only through the exchange.

Businesses with 50 or fewer full-time-equivalent workers can get coverage through the exchange in 2014, and that threshold will increase to 100 full-time-equivalent workers in 2016. But firms will have to meet certain requirements to get the tax credit.

They must cover at least 50 percent of the cost of single coverage for each employee. For a partial tax credit, they must have fewer than the equivalent of 25 full-time workers whose wages average less than \$50,000 per year.

The Congressional Budget Office expects those tax credits will amount to about \$1 billion in fiscal year 2014. Among the 668,000 Ohioans who by 2017 are expected to get coverage from an employer with 100 or fewer workers, 30,000 to 170,000 are expected to get coverage through the small-business exchange.

Several factors explain such a broad estimate, which comes from a state-commissioned report prepared by Milliman Inc. Among them: the degree to which small employers find the process cumbersome, the value they perceive in the available insurance plans and the number of insurers that offer them.

Census data suggest the small businesses and nonprofits in Ohio most likely to cover workers through the small-business exchange include those in the health-care, retail, construction and food-service sectors.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses, which sued the federal government over the health-care law, has estimated that 245,000 of 5.23 million employers would be eligible for the full tax credit. An additional 1.16 million would be eligible for the partial tax credit.

BUSINESS PEOPLE

HEALTH CARE

Mercy Health promotes Davis-Hagens

The chief nursing officer of Mercy Health – Fairfield Hospital has been promoted to a new position over the whole Mercy Health system.

Mercy Health appointed Pat Davis-Hagens to the role of market vice president of clinical operations and chief nursing officer of the system, effective immediately. The announcement was made Aug. 22.

The Mercy Health system is based in Blue Ash. In the new job, Davis-Hagens will provide leadership, direction and administration of operations associated with all of Mercy Health's patient care and clinical services.

Previously, Davis-Hagens was operations executive for Mercy Health - The Heart Institute. She was also chief nursing officer and chief operating officer of the Fairfield hospital. During her tenure in these prior

positions, she successfully reorganized the patient care delivery system, implemented a shared governance structure, increased recruitment and retention of registered nurses and nursing leaders, and initiated clinical task forces to improve quality outcomes and processes, according to Mercy Health.

"Pat is the natural choice to lead this new role for Mercy Health and I know that she will help us continue to achieve excellence in both clinical and administrative services," said Yusuf Ahmad, market president and chief executive officer of Mercy Health, in a statement.

"Since starting with Mercy Health in 2006, she has had responsibility for the nursing division as well as emergency, surgical, rehabilitation and pharmacy services and delivered outstanding results. There is no better person to help lead us on our journey to healthcare transformation," Ahmad said in a written statement.

Davis-Hagens is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American Organization of Nurse Executives.

Business calendar

TUESDAY

GREATER HAMILTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: noon to p.m. Networking Leads Group at Ryan's Tavern, 241 High St., Hamilton. Lunch is complimentary. Network, make new friends and get leads for your business. Bring business cards, and/or brochures and be prepared to present a one to two minute commercial about your business during the meeting. For more information, call the chamber at 513-844-1500.

Thursday

THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SERVING MIDDLETOWN, MONROE AND TRENTON: 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Monthly business luncheon at Middletown Area Senior Center, 3907 Central Ave., Middle-

town.

The cost is \$20 for members, \$30 for future members, or \$25 for members that are invoiced.

The speaker is Dana Davis. The topic is "Land of Illusion attracts national attention for Middletown."

For more information, call the chamber at 513-422-4551.

FRIDAY

OXFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: 5 to 7 p.m. ribbon cutting and re-brand opening at The Blink Boutique, 29 W. High St., Oxford. Join the chamber for a special ribbon cutting. Tour the new boutique and get introduced to the services available at The Blink Boutique including lash extensions,

teeth whitening, spray tanning, massage, skin care and cosmetics. Contact the chamber for more information and to R.S.V.P. at 513-523-5200.

SEPT. 12

GREATER HAMILTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SERVING MIDDLETOWN, MONROE AND TRENTON: 5 p.m. annual steak fry at MillerCoors brewery, 2525 Wayne Madison Road, St. Clair Twp. The two chambers are taking reservations for the upcoming annual steak fry. The deadline to register is Sept. 4. Special guest speaker is Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor. The cost is \$27 per person. For more information, call the Hamilton chamber at 513-844-1500 or the Middle-

town chamber at 513-422-4551.

SEPT. 18

CINCINNATI USA REGIONAL CHAMBER: registration 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and program 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; Affordable Care Act Seminar "Healthcare Reform: Take Charge in 2014 and Beyond" at Xavier University Cintas Center, 1624 Herald Ave., Cincinnati. The Cincinnati chamber will convene local insurance, tax, human resource and business experts to host the seminar. The free event is an educational seminar open to the public that is designed to help businesses in Cincinnati. The chamber says the seminar will offer insight on the responsibilities of health care reform, and attendees will learn how to: prepare for

changes in benefits programs; communicate key dates and information with employees; determine administrative impact of the ACA compliance; mitigate exposure to shared responsibility penalties; take advantage of the new ChamberHealth program; and leverage wellness programs, like Humana Vitality, to inspire a healthier workforce. The event is free, but registration is required at www.cincinnati-chamber.com. Contact the chamber for more information at 513-579-3111.

Note: Times are subject to change. Confirm dates, events and attendance with the chambers of commerce.