

# PROFILE

## PARKLINE, INC.

By Russ Willcutt



With an innovative self-framing building system, years of accumulated expertise, and a reputation for meeting deadlines, this company can protect your electrical assets.

**WHEN YOU DELVE INTO THE HISTORY** of many companies you'll often discover humble origins, with the founders making their debut in a basement, garage, or spare bedroom. But a doghouse? Such was the case for Parkline, Inc., but perhaps not in the way you'd imagine.

"Our story began in the 1930s, when the Parkersburg Rig and Reel Company came up with a new design for the small structure found on the back of a drilling rig that's known as a doghouse," according to Ron Dawson, Parkline's national sales manager. "What they came up with was a structure that could be assembled, disassembled, and used over and over. This was the original self-framing building, which we are still known for today."

Although Parkersburg passed through several hands over the years, including Butler Manufacturing, in the early seventies a group of longtime employees purchased the rights to the self-framing design and launched Parkline in 1972. The company became 100-percent employee owned and operated in 1996, and since that time it has tripled its sales, doubled its workforce, expanded its facilities—it is currently undergoing additional growth, as a matter of fact—and retired its purchase debt in 2009.

With markets served including electrical, oil and gas, and telecommunications, among many others, Parkline marked its entry into the wind-energy industry in a particularly impressive manner. A few years ago the general contractor for a wind farm that was under construction requested a quotation for the buildings it needed to house electrical hardware. "The guy warned me that they'd already contacted two other companies who told them their deadline couldn't be met, so we knew that it would be a challenge going in," Dawson recalls. "We discussed it among ourselves and then told them there was no reason we couldn't complete our work within their timeframe, as long as they held up their end of the bargain. Not only did we land the order, we had the buildings up and operational before the final deadline had arrived."

What enabled Parkline to meet this customer's needs when others said it wasn't possible? It's a long list, beginning with the fact that employee/owners tend to be more motivated than most. But it also has to do with the company's

decades of accumulated expertise, that it subcontracts very little of its work—even manufacturing its own hollow doors and windows—and generally keeps about \$5 million in raw materials on hand. Add these things together and you have a partner that's more than capable of expediting important orders.

Still, these self-framing storage buildings are about much more than four walls and a roof, and Parkline is able to provide a great deal more than shelter from the elements. Once the customer has provided its electrical scheme and a list of the various components it will house, the size of the building is determined, in addition to what type of HVAC system will be required. The extent of Parkline's involvement is also discussed, which can be limited to building/erection and extend all the way to installing the relay and control panels and other necessary equipment. "We are prepared to provide a complete turnkey package if that's what the customer would like," Dawson says. "All they need to do is tell us what they want and we'll do the work, hand over the keys, and we're out of there. That's one part of this huge project the contractor won't have to worry about."

Another benefit of having been around for so long is the knowledge Parkline possesses as to different state regulations for the types of structures it manufactures. While they are built at the company's headquarters in West Virginia, the buildings may be headed to a wind farm in Oregon, and the paperwork proving all codes for that state have been met must be provided in order for the project to proceed smoothly. "And now there are even codes in some states that lay out how much energy a building can consume, so you've got to be aware of where these laws are in place and what's required," he says. "We've made a point of being certified in all the states that have those particular codes in place."

Manufacturing in excess of 1,000 buildings each year—including single slope, gable roof, site-built, and pre-assembled models, for example—Parkline can boast having more than 70,000 of its building systems in place around the world. "It's great to have that kind of history and reputation, but we take every project we're involved in as if we're proving ourselves for the first time," Dawson says. "That's how you keep your good reputation alive, and build on it." 