

Our Mission

To be the leading consultant solving the engineering or land surveying problems unique to rural-urban communities and their enterprise—government, business, and agribusiness. And in the process, to build trust and lasting relationships with the people among whom we work and live. ◀

25 Years
1983-2008

Building trust and lasting relationships

KPL celebrates its 25th anniversary

It was the winter of 1983; and Neal Kuehl and Bob Payer were much sought after project managers working for a Storm Lake engineering firm then known as Associated Engineers—a firm which had evolved from a similar firm in Sac City known as Otto and Culver. Both Neal and Bob were long time employees of the firm. Neal since 1973, and Bob since 1977. Both watched as AEI began to break apart, another casualty of a tough economic climate. AEI's assets dwindled and much of its staff left.

"But, neither Bob nor I wanted to move our now growing families," remembers Neal.

"We liked Storm Lake," adds Bob. "So we elected to start our own firm."

"I don't think either of us had any trepidation when we went in. Bob always assumed we would get clients,"

"Well, both of us had former clients that were asking us to do new



projects for them. So I knew there was work."

"And I never thought it wasn't viable. Guess, we were too young to know any different," laughs Neal. And so in late winter of 1983, Kuehl and Payer was established to provide consulting engineering services to local and regional clients. "I worked in the basement of my house, and Bob worked out of his garage."

"But, not for long," interjects Bob, "It took us about three months to incorporate, by that time we were needing staff so we rented our first office at 1114 North Lake Avenue." KPL has been growing steadily ever

since. Says Bob, "The growth has been almost constant, we've added a person or two each year since we began except for our third year. At first the biggest challenge was continuing to find work. Some of our first work was even subcontracted from AEI as they were no longer able to satisfy clients' needs."

"And then after AEI went out of business completely, a lot of these clients continued to use us. We were able to take advantage of a vacuum," laughs Neal.

"And make the most of the good working relationships we had developed. It wasn't seamless, but it was similar work under a different company name."

Today, Kuehl and Payer, Ltd, has three offices—in Storm Lake, Algona, and Sac City—and almost forty employees. In addition to Neal and Bob, seven other shareholders help make up the management team—professionals in civil **Continued, 25, page 2 ...**



Covering the lagoon at the Strawberry Point Wastewater Facility.

KPL wins Grand Place Award from ACEC/IA

KUEHL AND PAYER has been awarded the Grand Place Award for Water and Wastewater Projects for 2008 from ACEC/IA. It is the highest award given in the category and one of the organization's most prestigious awards.

The project, managed by Neal Kuehl, features Iowa's first covered aerated lagoon designed to remove

ammonia year round and is central to the wastewater system improvements project completed for Strawberry Point last year. The City's lagoon system protects the waters of Backbone State Park located nearby and with the new year round aeration system, final effluent from the system not only meets, but exceeds, the DNR requirements. **Continued, AWARD, page 4 ...**



25 YEARS AT A GLANCE

April 1983	Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., is founded and rents space at 1114 North Lake Avenue
1988	Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., moves to new offices at 1725 North Lake Avenue Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., acquires Chuck's Surveying and Mapping Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., merges with Etler Engineering; and Don Etler, PE, joins KPL group of owners Neal Kuehl, PE, elected President of Consulting Engineers Council of Iowa (now American Council of Engineering Companies of Iowa) KPL wins Eminent Conceptor Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Linn Grove Dam Renovation on Little Sioux River for the Buena Vista County Conservation Board
1989	Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., opens office in Algona
1992	Scott Shevel, LS, joins KPL group of owners
1993	Ivan Droessler, PE, joins KPL group of owners
1996	Curt Wiseman, PE, joins KPL group of owners
1999	Don Etler, PE, named to American Council of Engineering Companies Environmental Business Committee KPL wins Honor Award For Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for project for Onawa Drainage District, Monona County
2000	Tom Edgerton, LS, joins KPL group of owners
2001	Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., acquires Sac City Surveying and Mapping and opens office in Sac City
2002	Bob Payer, PE, elected president of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Iowa KPL wins Engineering Achievement Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for swimming pool improvements for the City of Rock Rapids KPL wins Honor Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Construction of Alternative Drainage Outlets for Drainage District 176, Pocahontas Board of Supervisors
2003	Don Etler, PE, named American Society of Agricultural Engineers Member-of-the-Year KPL wins Honor Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Skate Park for the City of Spencer Parks and Recreation Department KPL wins Engineering Recognition Award for Engineering Excellence for Water System Improvements for City of Odebolt
2004	Neal Kuehl, PE, elected as Iowa's National Director for the American Council of Engineering Companies (first of four consecutive terms)
2005	Jeff Krueger, LS, and Kent Rode, PE, join KPL group of owners KPL wins Engineering Achievement Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Municipal Pool Renovation for the City of Primghar
2008	Kuehl and Payer, Ltd. celebrates 25 year anniversary KPL wins Grand Place Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Wastewater System Improvements for the City of Strawberry Point KPL wins Engineering Achievement Award for Engineering Excellence from ACEC/IA for Commercial District Storm Water Management Improvement for the City of Orleans

25, continued ...

engineering, transportation engineering, environmental engineering, structural engineering, agricultural engineering and land surveying.

Services include: water and wastewater operations; boundary surveys and land development; drainage and storm water control; recreation enhancements; management and local government services; transportation services; and environmental solutions. Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., clients include: city and county governments and agencies; corporate and

business entities, industrial firms, agribusiness ventures, families and individuals.

"But, it is our understanding of the particular needs of the rural-urban client that gives us a unique perspective on their particular engineering problems," says Neal.

"Bob and I and all of our professionals live in smaller towns or rural urban areas. We live where our clients live. We consider ourselves natives of the types of communities and clients for which we work. And I think that this 'co-ownership of

projects and problems' is a key to our success."

Adds Bob, "Twenty five years ago, neither Neal nor I wanted to leave Storm Lake. This is where we wanted to live and work. This is home. We do work for our neighbors. This is what builds trust and lasting relationships with our clients. A firm like ours can't remain successful without these strong bonds." These relationships have established a solid foundation for KPL's future. Both Neal and Bob look at the future with extreme optimism.

"The market is dynamic," says Bob. "Even though we are doing different things now, different kinds of projects, than we did 15 or 20 years ago, there is work out there. That work will continue to change. But we will evolve with the work.

"One of the challenges though will be finding young professionals that want to live and work in the size communities that we are in. The amenities and dollars in the metro areas have a pull on a lot of younger professionals."

Continued, 25, page 4 ...

PROJECTS

Drainage projects driven by ethanol and land values

"We have a full plate of drainage projects," says Don Etler; "the land value boom, ethanol interest, and grain markets have stimulated interest in improving drainage." Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., has been hired to design two tile mains resulting from the closure of the last **four drainage wells in Kossuth County**. "These projects are funded with a 75% cost share from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship."

Engineering design services for two additional **CREP projects—both in Buena Vista County**—have also been awarded to KPL. There are now six CREP projects in various stages of development underway. Nick Roethler is project leader. "Also in February, we filed the engineer's report for a \$2.1 million

storm sewer drainage relief project in Manson."

A hearing for the open ditch clean out in **Drainage District 6, Calhoun County**, is scheduled for late March. says Ivan Droessler.

"In the **Losey Drainage District, Monona County**, an additional 2.5 miles will be surveyed.

"In **FEMA repairs, on Drainage District 81, Sac County**, 60,000 yards of site slope excavation will begin this spring. And in **Calhoun County, contracts for five district contracts** have been approved with construction to take place in early summer. In the **Soldier Valley Drainage District, Monona County**, bids have been received for \$500,000 worth of rip rap work.

"We have **tree clearing projects for additional segments of Drainage District 34, Buena Vista County**. A tree clearing engineer's report for **Drainage District 122, Calhoun County** is also to be filed in April.

"The normal **district watchman work continues in Sac and Calhoun Counties**, covered by Greg Villegas. Brian Blomme is acting as district watchman for the **Nagle Drainage District in Monona County.**"

In non-drainage work, Ivan reports that work continues on the layout and design of **three additional turkey feeding operations for Sara Lee**. Plans for six sites have already been completed with the potential of ten more to be finished this year. Plan preparation for **three EQUIP funded swine projects** is underway. "These involve plans for reinforced concrete pits. There is also the potential for five additional EQUIP funded projects that are awaiting final decisions from land owners. "Final plans and specs for the placement of the **final cover for the Cherokee County landfill** are being discussed with the Department of Natural Resources. Revised regulations may change the amount of cover which is to be placed. In all work will involve over 80,000 yards of earth fill placement."

Bob Payer reports that KPL has been hired by **Alta** to develop a 20 lot subdivision south of the elementary/middle school area. "We will be developing plans for **streets, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage for the City of Alta**. John Devitt and Neal Kuehl will be working with **Alta Municipal Utilities on water mains** to be installed." KPL, under Scott Shevel, is also doing the **platting and survey** work. "Also we will be working with Laurens doing another block and a half in the downtown area—a total front to front reconstruction."

In ongoing projects, site work at the new **Storm Lake Elementary School site** will be starting by April. Also starting this spring are: the **parking lot in Aurelia** for the Community Center, T. R. Harris is the contractor; **paving and infrastructure for the new Holstein subdivision**, Godberson Smith is the contractor; **street improvements on Jensen street in Newell**, Smith Concrete Services is the contractor. **PROJECTS, continued, page 4 ...**

News about KPLers

KPLers attend RTK seminar and Land Surveyor Conference

Four of KPL's staff, **Scott Shevel, Tom Edgerton, Jeff Krueger, and Jon Myers**, attended the Annual Land Surveyor Conference and a seminar on the state wide RTK network which will be up and running by the end of August. RTK stands for Real Time Kinematic and is a process where GPS signal corrections are transmitted in real time from a reference receiver located at a known point to one or more remote rover receivers. Says Scott, "the system will allow us to dial in and use 79 base stations located around the state."

Number 9

Johannah Elise Payer, also known as Number 9 by Grandpa **Bob Payer**, was born January 28. "The count is now five boys and four girls," says Bob. Proud parents are **Tom and Wendy Payer** who live in North Las Vegas,

Nevada. Both are teachers in the Clark County School District.

Music, music

Katy Shevel, daughter of **Scott Shevel**, will be competing in the Iowa Music Teachers Association piano competition this year and will play three pieces. **Mike Etler**, son of **Don Etler**, also competed in this annual, statewide competition at the local level.

Sports

Alex Wiseman, son of **Curt Wiseman**, won a varsity letter for wrestling. Alex, a freshman at



Johannah Elise Payer

Algona, is one of only three freshmen to letter. He also took the championship at the JV Wrestling Tournament at Fort Dodge recently.

John Etler and Algona's A basketball team finished the season 16-0. John also plays on the B team. It finished 5-1. John is the son of **Don Etler**.

Best wishes

To **Amanda Brummer** and **Jeremy Betts** who will be married April 12 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alta. Amanda is the daughter of LaDonna Brummer. The couple will live in Waukee, Iowa. They both work for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in Des Moines.

Congratulations

To **Kris Edwards**, son of **Diane Edwards**, who received his Masters in Science and Fisheries from South Dakota State University in Brookings in December. He will be working as a biologist for the South Dakota State Fisheries at the Missouri River Fisheries Center near Oahe Dam.



Amanda and Jeremy on the mountaintop in Colorado where he proposed.

Happy birthday

To **Neal Kuehl** whose birthday is January 4, to **Tom Edgerton** whose birthday is January 9, to **Curt Wiseman** whose birthday is January 16, to **Earl Zimmerman** whose birthday is January 25; to **Ted Zimmerman** whose birthday is January 26; to **Justin Anderson** whose birthday is February 2; to **Ivan Droessler** whose birthday is March 12 and to **Peg Johnson** whose birthday is March 24. ❄️

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PROJECTS, continued ...

Bids for the **concrete parking area at Storm Lake's airport** are expected April 16.

Plans and specs for both the **Winnebago Water Plant and the Dennison Onsite Chlorine Generating System** are nearing completion reports Neal Kuehl. "We are waiting on spring to finish construction of the **Albert City water project** and the **Belmond Pool**. Facility planning studies for **wastewater systems in Sioux Rapids and Alta** will be done this spring, and we are waiting on the DNR for stream classifications so that we can continue with **Sloan, Odebolt, and Kingsley wastewater systems**."

Land acquisition and final plans and specs are in progress for the **Pomeroy Lagoon project**. John Devitt is project leader.

From the Algona office, Kent Rode, reports that work on the **Emmetsburg Business Park** has been awarded to Reddings Gravel and Excavating. "Reddings is also the subcontractor on the **Emmetsburg Grand Avenue project**." Gary Atherton is doing the inspection on both projects."

Initial planning with **Algona for recreational trails**—funded under a \$160,000 Federal Enhancement Fund Grant—has begun.

Site planning including parking, a retaining wall, sanitary sewer and water connections and an entrance road for a 61 unit facility with swimming pool for a new **Holiday Inn Express** is in progress.

Curt Wiseman reports that construction on the **Harold Rowley Recycle Center, part of the Buena Vista County Solid Waste Systems** will start this spring. This building will be used as a transfer point for construction debris which will be baled and transported to Cherokee's fuel pelleting facility.

Bids for **sanitary sewer improvements for Early** have been let. Says Curt, "This involves lining several blocks and rehabilitating 36 manholes. We have also let bids for a lagoon expansion there. "We are doing a survey and making plans and specs for **lift station**

improvements and the replacement of a **force main for Goldfield**.

"Plans and specs for a **storm sewer project** around the Lucia Wallace School in **Algona** are complete.

"Bids will be let in **Leland for a new lift station** out to the lagoon. This project calls for directional drilling under the Winnebago River. Since drilling under the river will be used, wetlands will not be disrupted and so permits from the Army Corps of Engineers will not be required."

If you would like to know more about these or similar projects, talk to any of the people mentioned. ◀

25, continued ...

"But, we've brought in a strong group of owners," puts in Neal, "and they will be able to find new members, and new owners when the time comes. We both think we've laid a good groundwork for others to follow."

"Part of the fun of building KPL has been growing the company with the staff we could acquire and obtain," adds Bob.

"That and getting to do the kind of engineering we really like to do."

"The best part for me though, my greatest satisfaction," says Neal, "is to drive around the country and see projects that have our influence on them. I can't go in any direction from Storm Lake and not see evidence of that."

And so, here's to the next twenty five years! Another twenty five years of building trust and lasting relationships with the people among whom we work and live—and in the process engineering. ◀

AWARD, continued ...

The award will be made jointly to Kuehl and Payer, Ltd., and the City of Strawberry Point in Des Moines at a special awards banquet on April 10.

On the same evening, KPL will also receive an Engineering Achievement Award in the Special Projects Category for the commercial

Welcome aboard

WELCOME ABOARD TO TWO NEW KPLers. Jon Hanson joins the staff of the Storm Lake office and Kathy McGuire joins the Algona office as a part-timer.

Jon is a native of North Branch, Minnesota, and a 2005 graduate of the University of Minnesota, Crookston. He has a BS in Natural Resources Management and has worked for the Army Corps of Engineers; as a park manager; and for the Blue Earth County Conservation District in Minnesota. Jon says he likes to hunt, fish and camp. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Pocahontas.



Jon Hanson

Kathy moved to Algona from Indianapolis with her husband who works for Pharmacists Mutual. They have three children, one son a freshman at Algona; a daughter at Butler University in Indianapolis; and a son who will be attending Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in the fall. Kathy, who majored in dance at Butler, has taught both gymnastics and nursery school. ◀

district storm water management improvements project completed for the City of Orleans. This project was managed by Kent Rode and evolved from a study originally conducted by Don Etler. The improvements resolved flooding problems in residential areas below Orleans' commercial district. ◀