

Seufert Construction & Supply Company

Founded: 1884

Location: Fourth and Missouri Streets, Ferdinand (1870–98); 1250 Main Street (1898–)

Benedict Seufert began a monument business near his home around 1870. He crafted the monuments mostly from marble with hand tools. At some point he also became a builder, at first only working on home construction, but later branching out into commercial work. In 1904 he rebuilt Sondermann's store, his first recorded commercial construction job. Within the next several years he also built the academy building for the Benedictine Sisters, the town's grade school, and completed St. Henry Church by 1911.

In 1927 Seufert turned over control of the business to his sons, Leo W., Albert J., and Edward V. Seufert's children had been a part of the business since 1912, as demonstrated by the change in the company's name to Seufert & Sons that year. The brothers continued their father's tradition, crafting both monuments and buildings. They built bridges, schools, gymnasiums, and industrial buildings as had their father, but also branched out into municipal and state projects. Some of their work included the construction of the Jasper public library, the Orleans water filtration plant, and the Ferdinand High School and gymnasium. After 1927 the company again changed names to Seufert Brothers Construction Company.

In 1952 Leo purchased the interests of his brothers, renaming the concern the Seufert Construction & Supply Company. Five years later he sold the monument division of the business to the Schum Monument Company of Dale. Seufert's company became a corporation in 1960. While changing the name and the administrative structure of the family's enterprise after 1952, Leo did not change the type of construction in

which the company engaged. It continued to build commercial and civic buildings, including the Princeton High School gymnasium, St. Mary's Auditorium of Ferdinand, and the Jasper Armory. Leo later passed the business on to his son, Wayne.

Wayne kept the company in the industrial and commercial building field throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In 1973 the Seufert Construction Company purchased a Butler building franchise. Butler Manufacturing Company is a leader in the construction of pre-engineered metal buildings nationwide, and the purchase proved to be a valuable asset to the company.

In 1984 Patrick A. Tretter and Michael Kluesner bought all of the corporation's stock from Wayne E. Seufert. Tretter had joined the Seufert firm in 1977 as controller, while his partner, Kluesner had worked as an architectural designer for Wayne E. Seufert & Associates before joining the family's construction company as an estimator in 1978. The partners decided not to change the company's designation, in part because of the respect the name engendered throughout the area. Tretter became president of the firm, a position he held until his death in the mid-1990s. The two did not change the company's orientation. Some of the structures the corporation built after 1978 include the Ferdinand Community Center, the Jasper Corporation's warehouse on Thirtieth Street, and several manufacturing and warehouse facilities for DMI Furniture.

In 1999 Kluesner retained the title of president, overseeing a firm that builds commercial and industrial structures in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio.