

Weinbrenner finalizes purchase of company by local investors

A local investment group headed by James V. Greenlee, former president of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company from 1971-1982, has purchased the shoe company from Bata Shoe Company which is based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The sale of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Inc., was announced today, February 2, 1988. The investment group includes several current management individuals as well as local investors. Ronald Nicklaus of River Valley Bancorporation led the financial arrangements for Weinbrenner through the River Valley State Bank.

James V. Greenlee, president of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company today, emphasized that there are no immediate plans for changes in the physical plant or in the manufacturing processes. There will also be no change in employee status. The only change is bringing ownership of the company back to Central Wisconsin.

The major advantage of the sale is that the company can continue to manufacture in Merrill and Marshfield and can retain their employees. Weinbrenner is a nationally-known manufacturer of work, safety and uniform footwear, with nationwide distribution. The company employs over 500 persons, with 300 at manufacturing operations in Merrill and 200 in Marshfield. The Bata Company was interested primarily in selling shoes, not manufacturing them.

"It is exciting to be able to keep our high level of skilled labor," notes Lance Nienow, vice-president of operations at Weinbrenner. "We have been known as the Craftsmen of the Northwoods." Nienow also commented that the major change with the sale will be the emphasis on Weinbrenner's Wood N' Stream® quality outdoor footwear along with continued promotion of the Thorogood® job-fitted footwear and the Weinbrenner name.

Mayor Richard Holt extends a return welcome to President Greenlee and is pleased that the company will be sustaining jobs in Merrill and Marshfield. "We owe a debt of gratitude to the people who put this transaction together for the benefit of Merrill and the business community."

The Weinbrenner Shoe Company was established in 1892 in Milwaukee by Albert H. Weinbrenner. Manufacturing operations were moved to present locations during the mid-1930's. General offices are currently maintained in Merrill. FN



Welcoming James Greenlee, president of Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Inc., back to Merrill after the purchase of the company by local investors is (left to right) Ronald Nicklaus, president of River Valley Bancorporation; Linda Seefeldt, marketing director of River Valley State Bank; Greenlee; and Mayor Richard Holt. ... Foto News.