

Lorain Glass Company – 100th Anniversary of service to the community

In June of 1924 Anthony Kosman was a 26-year-old father to be employed as a stained-glass installer in the Northeast Ohio area. He left school in the 6th grade to start work and help provide for his struggling family.

Following the aftermath of the Lorain Tornado on June 28, 1924, Anthony saw an opportunity to help re-build the city. He owned his work truck, so he got behind the wheel and headed to Lorain where he helped area business owners dig out from the rubble the tornado left behind. Through his work ethic and dedication, he earned their trust and started establishing relationships that were instrumental in the origin of Lorain Glass Company in 1924.

Following the rebuilding of Lorain and providing glass services to the community, the fledgling company managed to survive the Great Depression with Anthony still leading the company along with a small 2-to-3-person operation. With the onset of World War II, the company began to truly grow and thrive. This success led to setting up shop at 1215 Broadway in the 1940's. From that location they branched out to begin installing auto glass and were one of the largest distributors of Pratt & Lambert and Dutch Boy paints in the area while continuing storefront installation and glass, sash, and screen repair.

By the mid-1950's there were shops in downtown Lorain, Elyria, and Sandusky. Anthony's daughter Jean (Beach) and her husband James (later joined by children Bo, Brad, and Coleen) operated the Sandusky store while son-in-law Eugene Sofranko (wife Betty) and son John (Jack) Kosman operated the Lorain and Elyria operations. During this time, the patented "Glasshopper" mobile service repair system with a fleet of fully equipped workshop vans was developed. The "Glasshopper" trucks are still an integral part of the business currently and can be seen on job sites all over the area.

The 1960's and 70's saw continued growth and expansion primarily into new commercial construction and participation in various high-profile projects in Lorain and Cuyahoga counties. Many of which are still standing today.

On the company's 50th anniversary in 1974, Lorain Glass Company relocated into a newly constructed 30,000 square foot building on Grove Ave. in South Lorain. It was at this time that Betty Sofranko took over office management duties when the last of her nine children entered high school.

In the late 1970's and early 80's Betty's sons Christopher and Kevin Sofranko, and Jack's sons Scott and Steve Kosman entered the family business in a variety of positions and roles. Thus, beginning the third generation of family members to be in the business. As a direct result of continued growth and market opportunities, in 1984 Lakeland Glass Co, with Scott as president, was formed as a subsidiary entity to enhance the expanding business. Currently, Scott's son Alex is part of the company and starts the fourth generation to continue the rich family tradition.

Lorain Glass Co. has always been an ardent supporter of the city of Lorain, Lorain city schools, the Lorain Chamber of Commerce, and especially the former Lorain Catholic High School, where many former and current employees graduated. Many employees have been with the company their whole career and are integral parts of the company's success.

Throughout the years, the company has kept Anthony's vision and dedication as the driving force behind supplying quality materials, skilled craftsmanship and giving back to the community.