

ARDENT MILLS CUSTOMER CASE STUDY



Ardent Mills



Ardent Mills is North America's leading flour supplier and grain innovator. They have over 40 community flour mills and blending facilities throughout the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico. Ardent Mills employs over 2,500 employees throughout the continent. One of those mills is located in Lake City, MN. Seth Beyer handles all inbound and outbound shipments at the facility.

The Lake City mill is especially family-oriented, with multiple employees doubling as relatives. The mill employs three father/son sets, along with a handful of brothers and in-laws. This mix helps create a fun and local atmosphere.



Partnering with KE




Back in 2001, KE began providing on-site general electrical services to the Lake City Mill. At the time, even our President & CEO Karl von Knobelsdorff was out on call at the mill helping with whatever the facility needed, day or night.

Karl and his original crew were on site for maintenance work, like installing lights, wiring and rewiring motors, and other items that required qualified electrical maintenance techs as well as plant project work.

Ardent Mills takes a strong approach to our value of safety and determined years ago to have outside electricians to perform these tasks instead of those that are on the floor.



– Seth Beyer



Seth has personally seen the growth of KE from the beginning of our partnership with Ardent Mills to present day. Even though we began by providing simple electrical fixes, our partnership has evolved well beyond general electrical services. Now, Ardent Mills relies on KE to meet their facilities engineering, automation and electrical needs, tending to the entire site's working process.

Why KE?

We wanted Seth's opinion on why our partnership has evolved into so much more than it started out as. Why does working with us seem to go so well? So, we asked him.

We can now mesh pieces of the project together. Before we had to wait on multiple people to get back to us on just one piece of the project getting completed. Now, with KE working on everything, there's no waiting for multiple responses. It just gets done. KE is the Jack of All Trades when it comes to handling the processes needed.



– Seth Beyer

Seth also mentioned that before working with KE, the main issue he faced was communication. Communication problems waste time, waste money, and create issues within a project. Even having too many channels of communication can affect the efficiency of a project. When Seth experienced how clearly and effectively KE communicates, we gained the opportunity to prove ourselves with larger, more in-depth projects.

Now, Seth views us as his go-to partner for just about anything. We asked if he'd share with us how that happened, and he gave us two words: **Local & Trust.**



Local Provider

Choosing a local provider creates multiple opportunities for Seth and his team to maximize efficiency and get the most out of their partnership with KE. He mentioned that being able to visit our Eagan location gave him the opportunity to actually see what our engineers create for the site, as well as how we improve facility processes through these systems. Overall, the visit was a major plus for him.

A Provider You Can Trust

In regards to trust, here's what Seth had to say: **"I'm able to call whenever I need them, whether it's an emergency or if I just need a simple question answered. Having the ability to meet face-to-face eliminates any confusion between us."** Emails back and forth don't always get the right message across, which tends to be the most common form of communication when companies are states apart.



A True Partnership

Seth also mentioned that even if Karl and the KE team don't have the answer to a question or the capacity to complete a certain aspect of the project, he can still rely on us. We have an established network and know who to call to get information or get a qualified crew to help with a certain component of a project.

While other project managers might become lost or stuck when something comes up unexpectedly and they don't know who to turn to, KE knows how to steer people in the right direction. Even if we don't get the business, we don't view it as a loss. Being there for customers no matter what is a huge priority, and it pays off in the long run.

From Then to Now

To put the relationship between KE and Ardent Mills into perspective, in the beginning, we only worked on the general electrical needs of the site, and Karl was heading out on calls himself. Since KE is located in Goodhue, a little over 20 miles from Lake City, it was a convenient choice based on location. Our crew proved itself time and time again, helping build Seth's confidence in our capabilities.

Fast forward to today. We do everything on this site from lights and controls to maintenance and process optimization. From beginning to end, we offer ongoing support and maintenance. Seth knows he can call on KE, at any time and on any day, and we'll be there.



Increasing Efficiency

We've had the opportunity to dig into the processes at the mill and develop ways to increase efficiency. One project we partnered on resulted in cutting the time it takes to unload trucks from **20 minutes to just seven minutes**. Skimming 13 minutes per truck adds up quick when you're processing 1.6 million pounds per day! The increased efficiency alone paid for the project in just over a year and a half.

Becoming more efficient allowed Ardent Mills to take advantage of special pricing and stick with using trucks instead of rails. The operators were also given the ability to work on other items.

It's the partnership between Seth's team and KE that makes projects like this possible.





Why Should Companies Hire KE?

When we asked, "Why should companies hire KE?" Seth offered up a list of things they should consider:

1. Trust
2. Experience
3. Handling all "what if's" before the project even starts
4. No sugar coating
5. Meticulous
6. Help with the project is that much easier, and provided by the people who built it
7. Hometown feel in a large company

KE is a company we can trust, with years of experience. We can rely on their knowledge and connections to get the job done right. They don't sugar coat anything, they are meticulous in their preparation, and they lay it all out in an easy-to-understand manner. When you hire KE from the beginning, you have professionals every step of the way—from start to finish and beyond. Karl and his employees give you the hometown feel, but in a large company.



— Seth Beyer

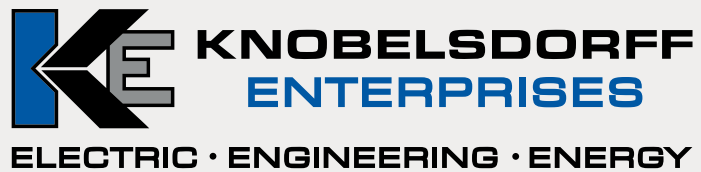


Within KE Engineering, we've been developing and honing our service offering for over 30 decades. As the industries we serve have evolved, so have the technologies capable of automating processes. Now, more than ever, there are opportunities to integrate efficiencies that automate previously manual tasks and improve already automated tasks in ways that actually move the needle.

Our approach to **industrial automation systems** takes a big-picture view of your facility, product, and processes. Our solutions are custom, our process is time-tested, and year over year, our customers continue to choose KE. Interested in partnering with KE? **Get started with a quote.**

**CLICK HERE TO START
AN AUTOMATION PROJECT**

**OR CALL OUR EXPERTS AT
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