

David Girtz, president and CEO of Girtz Industries, has helped to grow his father's small welding shop into a booming power packager and sheet metal fabricator.



MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

CHANGE. GROW. REPEAT.

HOW THE GIRTZ FAMILY GREW AN ANTIQUE-CAR HOBBY INTO A POWERFULLY THRIVING BUSINESS.

For Girtz Industries, a member of Carroll White REMC in Monticello, Indiana, 2015 was a record-setting year. Business is booming at this power packager and sheet metal fabricator that employs nearly 200 people in its 107,000-square-foot facility. Not bad for a company founded as a small welding shop repairing farm equipment for local growers.

David Girtz grew up with the business. "My father started the business 53 years ago, when I was born," he said.

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BEING A MEMBER-OWNED CO-OP MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE."**



Elmer Girtz was a skilled welder who also loved antique cars. In his shop, he started making parts for Model A Fords and other classics. His ingenuity in part-making led him to create his own production methods—and that led to opportunity for the entrepreneur. With the capacity to offer metal fabrication for local manufacturers, Girtz Industries grew both its reputation and its bottom line.

Today, David Girtz is president and CEO of the company his father founded—and the business has changed again. Now focused primarily on building electric power packaging equipment and accessories, Girtz Industries is still growing and providing even more great jobs on the shores of beautiful Lake Shafer—a prime tourism destination for visitors from across the Midwest.

"The model my dad established worked well with 10 employees, but by the time we were at 40 or 50, I saw how we needed to expand," said Girtz. "And it's still true that we're always searching for ways we can work smarter and save on overhead and production costs."

That search led Girtz Industries to seek out innovative ways to save on electricity. With the help of Carroll White REMC, they found the Industrial Assessment Center, part of the Purdue University School of Engineering and Technology. The center, one of 24 across the United States, exists to educate and to help small- and medium-sized companies—those who don't have the capacity for an energy-efficiency staff—find ways to use energy more efficiently.

The Industrial Assessment Center conducts free eight-hour energy audits to study how companies are using energy and where they're using more than they need. Their detailed reports, which also evaluate a company's past year of energy usage, lead to an average 20 percent reduction in energy use.

For Girtz, it led to a sleeker, more efficient operation, allowing the company to keep its focus on innovations and opportunities in the wind turbine and solar markets.

It's all part of the benefit of working with Carroll White REMC—an organization that's not only providing electric power, but also working to strengthen the community by helping businesses find ways to stay competitive. Girtz appreciates the relationship he has with his co-op.

"In all honesty, they've been a great partner over the years," said Girtz. "They're responsive, offer great rates, and always work with us. Being a member-owned co-op makes all the difference."

Learn how Wabash Valley Power uses energy efficiency rebates to support manufacturers. Contact Brian Anderson, Director of Economic Development, at b_anderson@wvpa.com or 317-409-9806.

