

An Innovative and Inspirational Gift

Collaboration and inspiration were key components in a recent sale of a family held corporation, Wenger Manufacturing, to Marel, a global leader in processing solutions. Through this sale the Wenger family was able to honor and strengthen the Sabetha community that has been the bedrock of their business since its beginning in 1935 by founders, Lou and Joe Wenger. Wenger executives along with other family members sought a buyer that would allow continuing efforts to connect the company with the unique bond the Wenger's have shared with the local Sabetha community.

The announcement was made by Wenger Marel executives, Paul Wenger and Jesper Hjortshoj. Mr. Hjortshoj spoke to the community at the Greater Sabetha Community Foundation annual Gala and said, "We are very proud stewards of the Wenger legacy. I have known the company for many years, and I have admired the company for many years. We always admired Wenger, but we never really got it. How can you build the world's center for this type of technology in northeast Kansas? Now I tell the 8000 people who work for Marel, why is Wenger so special? It is what you talk about here. It is a community where people support each other. Where they support businesses that are here, families that are here. And that is why we, as part of the process of the acquisition of Wenger, decided to donate these \$4 million that will be managed by the Greater Sabetha Community Foundation for the good of the community." The connection that has been established between Wenger, Marel and the community of Sabetha is a testament to the two corporations and the community.

Leslie Scoby, GSCF Director, has praised this collaborative effort that will benefit the community for years to come. She also said, "It is our hope that this type of creative agreement for the sale of a family business, can be a model to inspire other community-based family held businesses in the future. How blessed we are to work alongside this family as they move forward to share their goals and dreams with the community that has been with them from the start."

The Wenger Marel Charitable Fund will support sustainable development and community investment in the following areas: 1) Reading and STEM Education, 2) Food, Nutrition and Water and 3) Community Support.

GSCF is working with the Wenger Marel Charitable Fund executive board to establish granting application guidelines and timelines. The Greater Sabetha Community Foundation was established in December 2015 and has grown to include 134 total funds, 26 are scholarship funds and 23 are donor advised funds and a total asset base of \$13,167.117.