



Shain Bakos, Bakos NDT's president

Bakos (NDT) Inspection (1989) Ltd.

Western Canada's leader in non-destructive testing

Safety and quality are top priorities at Bakos (NDT) Inspection (1989) Ltd., which provides non-destructive testing services in western Canada. Based in Whitecourt, Alberta, Bakos NDT does new construction and integrity inspections for all types of industries, ranging from the oilfield, to pulp mills, power plants and other industrial operators.

Bakos NDT was established in 1982 by Frank Bakos, who grew the company over the years before handing over the reins to his nephew, Brian Bakos, who became a partner in 1989 and took over the company's operations in 1993. Frank's son, Shain, became a shareholder in 2004. In 2008, Shain bought out his partners in order to follow his visions of the future.

The quality of the people are what set Bakos NDT apart, says Shain Bakos,

company president, who is proud of the name that Bakos NDT has built for itself over the years. Bakos NDT is unique among its peers in that it has always been family-owned and operated. Bakos NDT continually refines itself and explores new technologies in order to improve the service it provides to customers. Bakos NDT's 30 employees work primarily in Alberta and British Columbia but have recently began exploring the international marketplace, doing everything from major oilfield construction projects to electrical generating power plant turbines, jet turbine-powered natural gas pumps, and the pulp and paper industry. The services provided include radiography testing, magnetic particle testing, ultrasonic testing, liquid dye penetrant testing, hardness testing, corrosion surveys and life assessment.

"We are protecting the environment," Shain says. "Anything used for storage or transportation — such as oil and gas pipelines, virtually anything that is welded together or subjected to the elements that can pose a hazard to health or environment — we inspect. For example, we come in at the construction phase of a gas plant to make sure everything that gets put into place is safe. We come in during operation to make sure things continue to be safe, and we come in at the end when they take it out of service, to make sure things don't cause problems in the future."

Shain began working in the industry in 1991 at the age of 18, "which is as early as you can get into this business," he says. By age 25, Shain ranked in the top four per cent of qualified workers across Canada in the non-destructive examination industry.



"It gives Bakos NDT a unique experience in the industry, compared to other companies," Shain says. "As an owner, I have experience with all aspects within the industry, what jobs to go after and how to serve the customer best. If the top guy knows what he is talking about under every situation, then the customer will be confident that they are being properly serviced."

Although Shain doesn't work in the field anymore, he continues to add to his skill set, and acts as a mentor to his workers. "I go and check things out and bring my knowledge back to them," he says. "I share with them, so they can be a lot more successful. Customer confidence is a huge thing to me."

These are just a few of the reasons that Bakos NDT continues to thrive. "We've been riding out the storm quite successfully," Shain says. "More tenders for large projects are crossing my desk than I've ever seen before. What we are watching for is that all these large tenders actually turn into real work. It's difficult — only time will tell whether the recovery is real."

For Bakos NDT, "2009 was a rebuilding year. Everything was looking pretty rough. You've got to take that negative, turn it around and say, 'What will make our

company more attractive for the work that is continuing?'" For Bakos NDT, the answer was to increase the quality of its people, procedures and equipment. "That way, when you go and sell yourself, you have a better product to give than the person that didn't," Bakos says. "I'm not building the company for pure profit, I'm building it for longevity."

To this end, Bakos NDT is offering several new services, including remote visual inspections, ground penetrating radar, and API inspections for vessels, tanks and piping. The company has also been working to forge agreements and associations with other non-destructive testing firms, in order to offer a broader service offering and compete on a larger scale. "It's making really good contacts, seeing where we can come together and letting us compete with some of the union outfits."

In the past year, Bakos has made changes to the company's administration structure and has been going after more jobs, including international contracts — a move that is promising to take Bakos NDT to an entirely new level. "At Bakos, we are striving to compete in the international market, and so far have had a good response from it."

And for the industry as a whole, Bakos sees things levelling out. "People are starting to go back to work. The future is bright if we can all hold on." 🔒

FAST FACTS

COMPANY NAME:

Bakos (NDT) Inspection (1989) Ltd.

PRESIDENT: Shain Bakos

FOUNDER: Frank Bakos

YEAR INCEPTED: 1982

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 30

BUSINESS CATEGORY:

Service industry, industrial inspections

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