



Trevor Armstrong, president

## WAZEE COMPANIES, LLC

*Serving the heavy-industrial market with cross-trained technicians and diversified project management*

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSSAT

### AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:  
DENVER, CO  
EMPLOYEES:  
55  
SALES GROWTH  
IN LAST YEAR:  
15%+  
WEB SITE:  
WAZEECO.COM

NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFUL A COMPANY IS, IT could not exist without the people who comprise it. Perhaps that fact is no more evident than at Wazee Companies, LLC, where those behind the company's success are part of a long-standing tradition of family values and friendship.

Wazee Electric (Wazee's first entity) was founded in 1921 as an electrical contractor. Wazee president Trevor Armstrong notes, "Our primary scope at that time was to work on basically anything and everything electrical—including residential, commercial, and industrial." During the World War II era, Armstrong's grandfather purchased the compa-

ny and it immediately began to branch out and expand its offerings, working on welders and motors as well. "That point in time is really when I think we became more of an industrial-type company versus a general contractor for electrical," Armstrong adds.

Today, Wazee mitigates challenges in both renewable and traditional forms of energy for their clients—heavy-industrial players that the company classifies as utility, aerospace, and large-scale manufacturing entities.

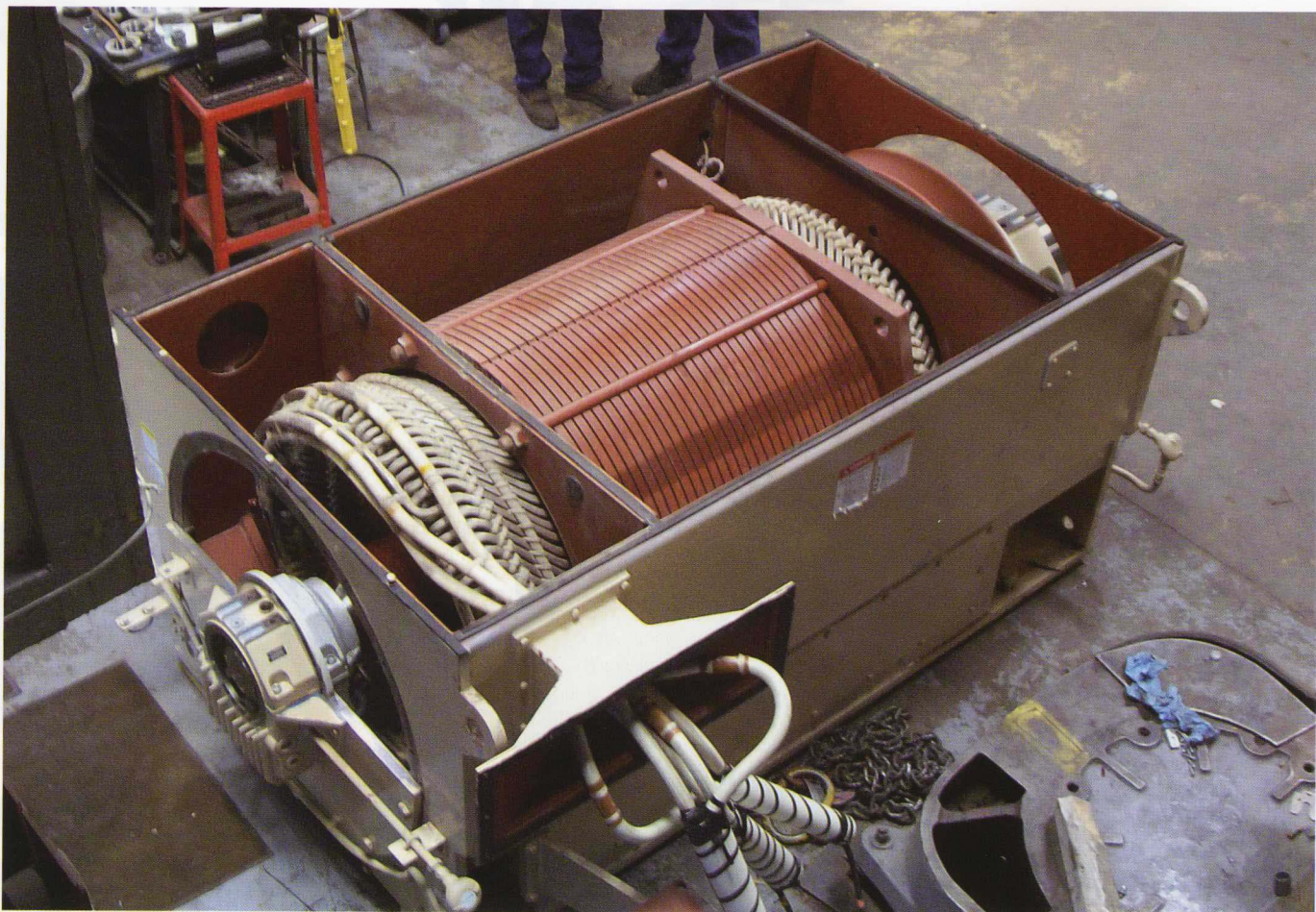
There are actually three subsidiaries that comprise the parent company. Wazee Electric (WE) is still an electrical contractor for the industrial arena, doing highly specialized electrical work. This includes motor controls, motor rewinding and repair, and any sort of custom generators. Wazee Wind (WW) does up-tower repair of generators and electrical components, as well as equipment-hoist inspection and repair. Finally, Wazee Crane (WC) manufactures and services overhead traveling-bridge cranes.

According to Chris Donahue, Wazee's field-service and wind-division manager, WW has the potential to be the fastest-growing division in the company. "We definitely see the wind division as probably our biggest mover in the next 5-to-10-year span," says Donahue, who believes that the federal administration's push for renewable energy has helped propel this growth. Wazee was able to effectively utilize its experience from its long history and inject itself into the renewable-energy arena at full force. "We just took our expertise from the work we've been doing for 85-plus years with motors and generators on the ground, and applied it to the specific niche of doing similar up-tower work," Donahue says.

Wazee approaches innovation through a network of knowledge sharing with established partnerships in its industry. The North American Wind Service Alliance (NAWSA) is a membership group that is comprised of 10 privately owned companies that are broken down by region and spread throughout North America. All of the companies meet regularly each quarter to bounce ideas back and forth. "By having that alliance, we're able to do effective marketing, establish consistent industry approaches, and evolve our internal training to make sure we're up to date on all the newest technology," Donahue adds.

Donahue believes Wazee's competitive edge comes from the company's ability to draw expertise and skill sets from all three of its divisions. "For example," he says, "if our wind group is doing up-tower work and a specific motor or generator needs servicing, we will assist in bringing the generator or motor down, transport it back to our motor shop, and then draw upon our capabilities to handle that motor's rewind or reconditioning repair ourselves." He adds that Wazee cross-trains all of its technicians, and that it productively utilizes its NAWSA partnerships. "Our NAWSA alliance also gives us a very competitive edge





Wazee's specialized electrical-repair work includes traditional motors (shown above) as well as wind turbines and wind-powered engines.

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because we're able to draw upon the resources of our NAWSA partners," Donahue says. "If we have a big project coming up, we're able to borrow anywhere from 3 to 50 technicians from other NAWSA companies to handle it."

Armstrong agrees, adding that Wazee is very vertically integrated. "If there's an issue that comes up inside of the industrial realm that we serve, almost always, we can solve it internally." Perhaps this efficient and adaptive structure

gives Wazee one of its most impressive attributes—a 48-hour response time. "Once we're contacted, we can get to the site very quickly because all of our shops within the alliance are in a 10-hour-drive circle," Armstrong says. "So if there's an issue with a tower, we can be on-site within 48 hours anywhere in North America."

Since both of their families owned electrical contracting companies, Armstrong and Donahue basically grew up in the field and started working in the electrical industry at early ages. When they later met in college, a natural connection was formed. This lasting friendship and strong business partnership has directly contributed to the continuing success of Wazee.

These two friends plan to grow Wazee even further, sustaining and advancing the company's legacy of diversified energy and industrial offerings, renowned work, and family values. "I just want to continue to provide the same service and the same quality that we have for 88 years," Armstrong says. EIQ