

RECYCLING

PRODUCT NEWS

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From left: Haddera, Adam and Mark Chisick, the family behind Urbanmine, bring a fresh approach to the scrap business.

METAL RECYCLING REDEFINED

WINNIPEG-BASED URBANMINE IS TAKING A FRESH APPROACH TO THE SCRAP BUSINESS

“Everything from our name to how we operate is different. We wanted to have a name that represents what it is we were going to do: we are mining the city.”

ADAM CHISICK

When Adam Chisick, his father, Mark, and mother, Haddera, set up Urbanmine Inc. in 2007, they set out to redefine metal recycling by creating a company that was fresh, modern, transparent and very different from the traditional image one might have of a scrapyard or junkyard.

“We envisioned friendly staff, a clean, inviting atmosphere, an organized facility and transparency in every form of the business. We wanted to make it a place that people wanted to do business with,” explains Adam Chisick. “Everything from our name to how we operate is different. We wanted to have a name that represents what it was we were going to do: ‘we are mining the city’.

Urbanmine’s slogan, “Metal Recycling Redefined”, is central to the company’s operational philosophy today. With a staff of 50 and a 35,000 square-foot facility on five acres in southwest Winnipeg, the company’s front office, as an example, has an aesthetic more reminiscent of a tech firm than a traditional scrapyard.

When it comes to their employees, Chisick says they have developed what they call the Urbanmine culture.

“We take time hiring because we want to make sure that we have people that fit the team. We hire for attitude above everything else. Someone that has experience and education in the industry along with a great attitude is the total package, but often you don’t find an individual with all three strengths. For us, attitude is the most important feature. If they have the Urbanmine attitude we’re confident they will fit the culture and we can train for the rest.”

Urbanmine collects and recycles ferrous and nonferrous materials from retail (including the general public and tradespeople), commercial sources and from other metal recyclers. Processed materials are shipped worldwide.

They also handle electronic waste which is sold to downstream processors. “For e-waste, we act as a collection point for the community to ensure the material isn’t going to the landfill and is recycled responsibly,” explains Chisick.

Urbanmine’s key equipment for processing incoming material includes multiple scales, material handlers, shears, flatteners and balers. They also run a granulation line for copper and aluminum. “Essentially, our granulation line takes insulated copper and aluminum wire, grinds it up into small pieces and uses air, gravity and magnetic separa-

tion to create clean streams of copper and aluminum.”

They also run a fleet of semi-trailers, lugger trucks, box vans, flat decks and other trailers which can be customized to suit a variety of customers.

“Our job is to take metals from their raw form and process them into specific packages that can be sent in volume to consumers such as smelters, foundries, mills and refineries. We have the ability to provide size- and chemistry-specific product to ensure it meets the specs of our customers.”

WORKING WITHIN A VOLATILE SCRAP METAL MARKET

Metal pricing is extremely volatile. “Our philosophy is to purchase material, process it as efficiently as possible and sell it.

“There are lots of philosophies based on holding on to material until there is a spike in price. A lot of times you can get lucky and do very well that way, however, you’re tying up inventory and cash flow. We’re not in business to gamble. We consider ourselves a manufacturer because in principle we bring product in, upgrade or add value to it, sell the material and repeat the process.”

As a fourth-generation recycler, Adam has the benefit of being able to draw from experience and knowledge that has built up from as far back as the 1920s, when his great-grandfather started in the recycling business.

“The relationships we’ve developed with our consumers and vendors are extremely important. The marketplace is becoming increasingly competitive and we’re always looking at ways to provide more value to both parties. Mostly through word of mouth, along with relationships that have been developed over generations, we have cultured a very loyal customer base. Many of our customers have become like family over the years and we take great pride in that.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY IN WEIGHING

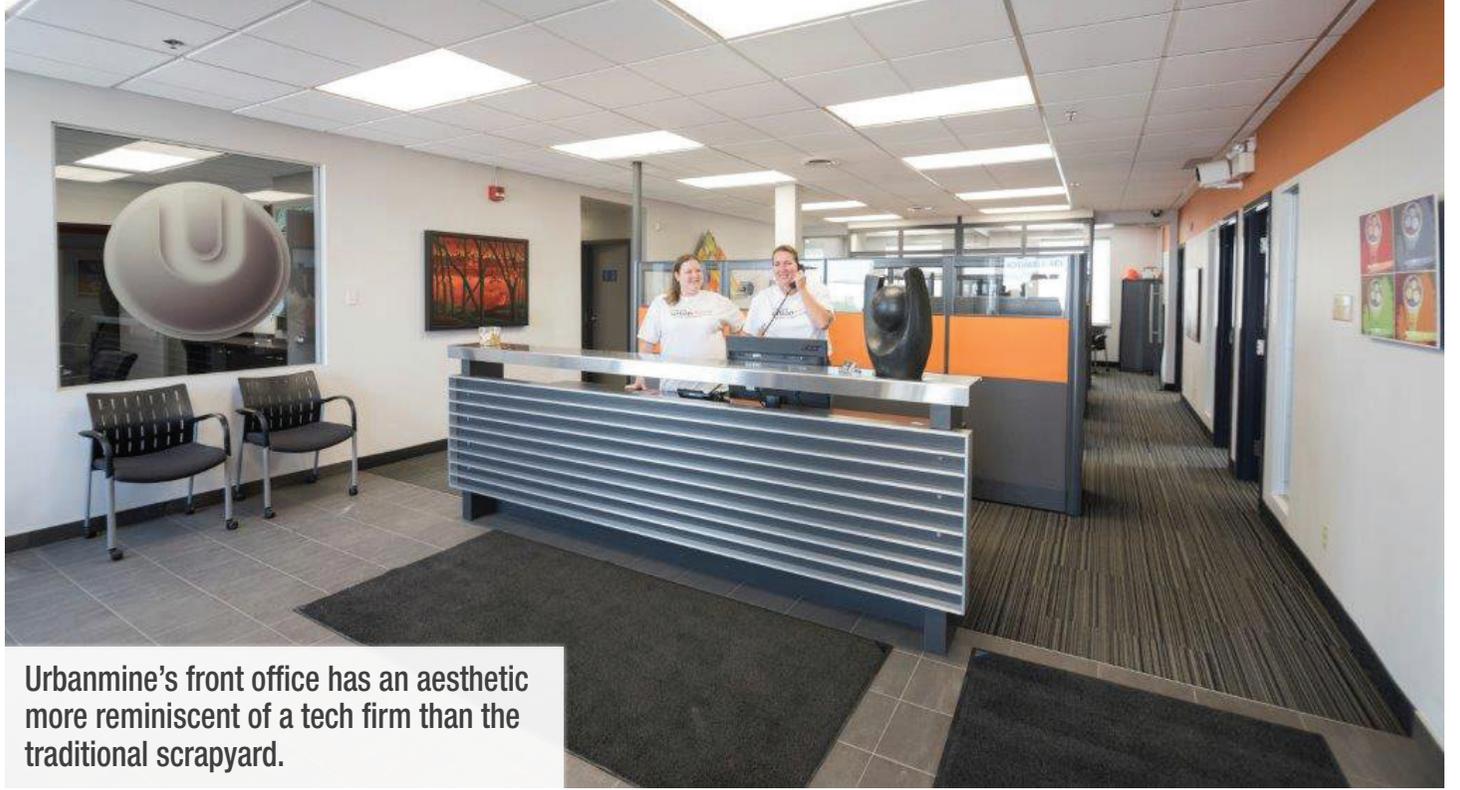
All Urbanmine’s scales are certified several times each year in accordance to industry regulations. Additionally, every scale at Urbanmine has a visible display for customers to read at all times.

“Transparency is at the forefront of everything we do and this is just one way we deliver this. We want to provide comfort to our customers to ensure that they know they are being paid for every pound they deliver to Urbanmine, no questions asked,” explains Chisick. “Our mobile service has scale-equipped trucks that go directly to the customer and weigh the material with them prior to purchasing.”

SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

According to Chisick, as the metal recycling industry continues to evolve, continuously updating safety and environmental procedures is paramount.

“It’s something that we take very seriously. People are our most important asset and we want to do everything



Urbanmine’s front office has an aesthetic more reminiscent of a tech firm than the traditional scrapyards.



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SCRAPYARD EQUIPMENT & OPERATIONS

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in our power to make sure that our processes and the equipment they're using are safe.

"Our equipment is modern and equipped with the latest safety features. Over and above that, we have a safety committee with which we review all of our processes on a regular basis."

When it comes to maintaining top environmental standards, it involves keeping equipment up to date and having procedures in place. With respect to used oil and ELV fluids management, for example, Urbanmine uses the latest equipment and procedures designed to contain oil and other fluids.

"Many of the areas of our facility that accumulate oil are on concrete surfaces. We use a fluid evacuation area for vehicles where we extract fluids directly into tanks. The oils are all sent to an environmental company that specializes in managing oil and other ELV fluids."

Urbanmine also works with ISRI, through their RIOS program, to ensure their policies are always up to date and that procedures run according to current standards. "This is very important," says Chisick. "RIOS is similar to an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) program, but is specific for the metal recycling in-



Urbanmine collects and recycles ferrous and nonferrous materials as well as e-waste, operating out of southwest Winnipeg with approximately 50 employees.

dustry. It encompasses quality, health and safety, and environment and is a program that we've been working with for quite a while. We also work closely with Workplace Safety and Health here

in Manitoba.

"In essence, we always want to be one step ahead of industry regulations to ensure sure that we're not going to have any environmental issues, and our employees are working safely every day."

Beyond providing a safe and positive environment for their employees and customers, and diverting huge amounts of metal and other recyclables from landfill on a monthly basis, Urbanmine works with their community in several ways.

"We work with a company called Equal Opportunities West (EOW) who offers employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities who wouldn't be able to work otherwise. Urbanmine provides EOW materials at no cost that can be broken down and upgraded. We then purchase these materials from them and the funds go to helping the EOW program.

"Habitat for Humanity is another community program we work closely with. Through our joint program 'Old Parts, New Starts', the public can donate their old or scrap vehicles to us, and the proceeds will go to Habitat for Humanity to help build houses for those that wouldn't have the ability otherwise."

Urbanmine's diligent attention to safety, environment and the community is certainly a key element of how the company is living up to their slogan: "Metal Recycling Redefined."

But Chisick says the phrase is really meant to describe everything they do.

"We have worked hard to create a modern, efficient, clean and transparent metal recycling experience. We use innovative processes and methods to handle metals that are more tailored to our customers' needs.

"Our motto 'Metal Recycling Redefined' has become part of our culture. At Urbanmine we're always looking at ways to improve our customers' overall experience and it's something we're all very proud of." *RPN*

URBANMINE'S KEYS TO SUCCESS IN METALS RECYCLING MEANS:

- A clean, inviting atmosphere, an organized facility and transparency in every aspect of the business.
- Friendly staff. Urbanmine makes sure they have people that fit the team, and hires for attitude first.
- The right equipment, technology and innovative processes enable Urbanmine to provide size- and chemistry-specific product, tailored to the specs of customers.
- Solid relationships with consumers and vendors – many built over generations.
- Transparency in weighing including scales certified yearly and visible displays for customers.
- Mobile service which makes recycling easy for businesses and tradespeople.
- Continuous updating of safety and environmental procedures.
- Partnerships with community organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, and Equal Opportunities West.

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Richard Golf
Managing Partner
Lakeshore Recycling
Systems

I Chose Machinex

"When the time came to build and design our first single-stream facility, the answer was clear to partner with Machinex to create an exceptional system. From the initial planning to the weeks after the facility's opening, Machinex offered extensive training and thorough support for optimal performance at our facility. We couldn't be happier with the results; it has supported our mission to continually drive our recycling efforts forward with innovative technologies."



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