

October 1, 2021

45 Years of Service with Ron Beck

Ron Beck has achieved 45 years and 1 month of service at Americhem working his way up from preparing samples to becoming a product design specialist and relocating to multiple plants during his career. Ron is currently the R&D Manager at Headquarters. He was hired on August 30, 1976 while he was going to school to become an architect at Kent State University. Ron has played a critical role in the start-up of 3 different labs for Americhem and has developed his primary expertise in color science.

To celebrate Americhem's 80 year anniversary, Ron was kind enough to be interviewed as one of Americhem's longest tenured employees. The dialogue was as follows:

What was the field of plastics like when you first started?

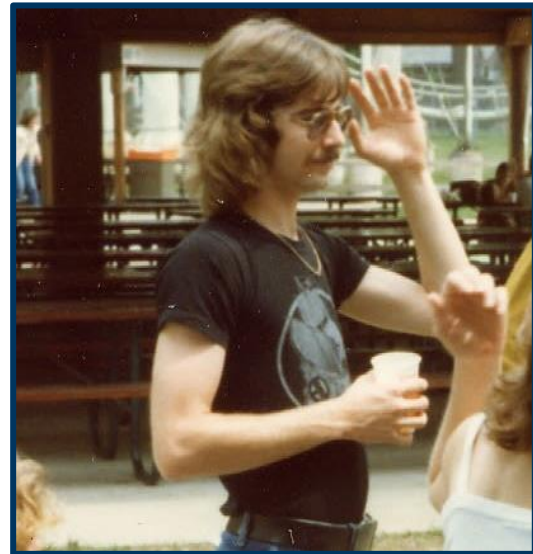
Back then, lead and cadmium pigments were used frequently, but as these materials started getting banned, customers began demanding that their products be redesigned without hazardous pigments. This was quite difficult with their high performance specifications such as high heat resistance and demanding weatherability performance.

What were some of the biggest challenges back then?

Pigmenting fibers was definitely the biggest challenge at the time. We went from using colors that were easily dispersed to fibers industry colors, which used extremely dirty pigments and bright shades with highly difficult dispersion requirements. Our fibers team was incredible though, because everybody was trying to push the same giant rock up the mountain and we all knew which side to get on to keep it moving. We were very successful.

What changes have you seen in plastics?

Automotive colors were a lot harder back then because interiors were using flaming reds and bright blues as opposed to today where everything is neutral and gray.



Picture 1: Ron at one of his very first Americhem Employee Appreciation Days at Geauga Lake Park.

What have been the greatest developments in the field of plastics over the last 45 years?

There have been so many bright organic pigments developed that hold up in high heat at a reasonable price compared to the old cadmium and lead pigments.

From your perspective, what would you say are Americhem's greatest accomplishments?

The financial support to so many families. I was able to buy multiple houses, pay off my current house, raise 3 kids, and that is all thanks to Americhem.

In your opinion, is there anything that Americhem should have done differently?

When we started our plant on Steels Corners Rd in Ohio, I was leading the startup of the new lab. We were so excited about the new location's opportunities that we put too much on our plate. It was the only time that I felt burn-out in my job.

What are some of your fondest Americhem memories?

All of the friends that I have made over the years. Being a manager has allowed me to meet many people across all of our plants. I've even spent quite a bit of time at our plant in Manchester when I was there 2-3 weeks at a time on and off for over a year and a half. I have such great memories from those trips and I would have never had that opportunity without Americhem.

What are the key issues that you see Americhem addressing in the future?

Obviously from this series of interviews, you can see that Americhem has a lot of employees with long tenures and upcoming retirements, but these people hold immense knowledge of our processes, products, and technology. There will be a wave of new hires over the coming years and Americhem will address and have a plan in place for the transfer of that knowledge. I've already been preparing for quite some time now by creating e-learning videos and courses to try and pass on my expertise.

Please share one memory of a funny situation that you encountered at Americhem.

There was one time when we had a new hire and of course, we had to prank him a little. One of the guys climbed up a ladder, hit the fire alarm bell with a hammer, and the new guy went running down the main stairs. Well, we were all standing at the top of the stairwell balcony with a big bucket of water and dumped it on him as he went running out.



Picture 2: Ron Beck.

Describe what Americhem means to you.

The first part of what Americhem means to me is relationships. I've made many friends and had the best mentor I could ask for: Rick Mathew. Rick is the one who pushed me to apply for my first job here, guided me through my career, and taught me how to be a leader. I can attribute all of my success to him. The second part is that Americhem has always quenched my thirst for knowledge and creativity. My single request from the beginning was "just don't let me get bored" and that has held true through my entire career. They've always kept me on my toes, pushed me to do my best, and allowed me to grow. My answers to the previous questions seem so insignificant now because when I look back at all this company has given me, I can't ask for more.

Thank you Ron for your endless commitment to Americhem and your timeless friendship to many of us. We wish you continued success in your long standing career and look forward to your ongoing positivity you spread across the company.