



GNB Corporate History

Over 40 years ago a bright engineer named Gary N. Burnett started a company in his garage. Gary was a capable and hard working man who started making small items such as heat shields. Gary would work late into the night on his personal projects while working for Temescal during the day. Temescal was known for making complex gate valves. Eventually Gary generated enough business to move his manufacturing to Pacific Street in Hayward California where in 1968, he started the GNB Corporation. He enlisted a couple of his friends from Temescal as his assistants. During the early years, Gary took almost any type of work he could find. He built complete turn-key coating systems, planetary gear drives, positioners, custom machining, engineering work; and he built a variety of products for the vacuum industry. In the 70's and 80's, Gary worked to simplify his vacuum valve designs. GNB had an important market niche of supplying large gate valves for the metallurgical field, and Gary did his best to reduce the complexities found with most valve designs at the time. Much of Gary's engineering and design work can still be seen in our current gate valve designs.

Sierra Concepts Corporation became interested in GNB around 1989, and by 1990 Sierra had completed the purchase of GNB. In an effort to improve quality and focus on the interests of our customers, Sierra Concepts Corporation decided to move GNB from Pacific Street to the Huntwood Business Park. Stan Cohelan was president of GNB from 1990 to 2005 and was pivotal in organizing GNB into a more focused and efficient company. Working with Dalny Travaglio, a highly experienced engineer, Stan worked on improving GNB's capabilities, processes and the designs of GNB's gate valve line. Along with standard gate and angle valves, GNB produced many custom valves and chambers, and engineering expertise became our trademark through the 90's.

The Huntwood facility was much better than the Pacific Street plant. Workers had everything they needed to do their jobs in a great environment. However, GNB was growing during the late 90's and needed more space. When real estate prices exploded in the San Francisco Bay Area, workers could no longer afford to live nearby. GNB had difficulty finding workers, and many employees commuted hours each day. In 2001, we began our search for a new location. With our focus on affordable homes for our workers and a community from which GNB and its workers could thrive, we found Elk Grove, California. This is a modern community on the southern edge of Sacramento, California. We enjoyed a successful move and have since hired many great employees.

Ken Harrison joined the GNB team as the President in 2005. Ken's engineering expertise has brought continued development of our standard products as well as many new products which gives us renewed energy for the future. In the past three years, business has tripled; and we have grown from 26 employees to 70.



GNB is well known for its ability to successfully engineer and manufacture vacuum products for the most difficult of applications. While others in the industry can claim to manufacture a larger quantities of gate valves, GNB is highly renowned and the market leader for: 1. Large sized gate valves (we have built some of the largest in the world, and our space simulation valves are used in the most prestigious space agencies around the world), 2. High temperature gate valves (our water-cooled valves are used in extreme temperatures for casting, forging, heat treating and silicon growing applications), 3. Valves for highly contaminated environments (many valve makers have experience with clean room valves, but GNB leads the way in environments such as coatings, metal spatter, broken glass, powders and metal chunks. 4 Valves integrated into systems (because GNB manufactures, chambers, valves and accessories we routinely combine them to reduce costs and space), and 5. Valve customization (GNB has built custom valves for the most demanding applications including: low shock, radiation, tight physical sizes, unique shapes and sealing mechanisms, different types of drive mechanisms and extreme temperature ranges—no one has a broader range of experience).

Since 2005, GNB is transitioning from a company culture of a custom engineering/fabrication shop to a world-class manufacturing organization. In 2008, we completed the requirements for ISO 9000 certification.

We continue to invest in our company. Since moving to the Elk Grove facility, we have dramatically increased our capacity by adding three large CNC mills, two smaller mills, a large CNC 5-axis waterjet, several new leak test stations, and many weld stations. We have also added 20,000 sq. ft. of floor space.

Today we specialize in vacuum valves, vacuum chambers and vacuum hardware accessories. The two qualities that set GNB apart from our competition are our ability to make large products (if you can find a way to transport it, we have the equipment to build it) and our experience of successfully engineering products for the most difficult applications.

From a small garage shop type business to a 50,000 sq. ft. facility, GNB has a reputation of developing great products at reasonable prices. Our mission is to provide highly successful vacuum products for science and industry. Along the way, we have satisfied many customers, and we have participated in some remarkable scientific applications.

