

# 2009 IASM President

Incoming president **Joshua (Josh) Wendland**, president of **Milbank House Movers, Inc. of Milbank, SD**, has never forgotten the first annual IASM convention he attended. "I was in awe of what I saw in the media room and at the awards ceremony," Josh said of that experience. "I thought to myself this was a great group of people all doing something that they love to do and seemed to make good livings doing it."

In the meantime, Josh has served two terms on the Board of Directors, including its executive committee, as secretary in 2006, treasurer in 2007, vice president in 2008, chair of the Education Committee, on the Awards Committee and now as president. His participation and performance are a testament to the association's past and present, and bodes well for its future.

A second-generation structural mover, Milbank House Movers, Inc. (MHM) was begun in 1964 by his father, James H. (Jim) Wendland. That year, following a stint of duty in the U.S. Army in Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, Wendland returned to Milbank and sought extra income to expand his dairy operation. Earl Nielsen, who had been in the house moving business there since 1942 as Nielsen House Moving, offered him a job.

The following February, Wendland bought Mr. Nielsen's equipment and renamed the business

Milbank House Movers. The \$16,000.00 deal included a 1952 GMC, a 1951 International and a 1961 GMC truck, a few pair of wood timbers, wood cribbing, 6 bar jacks, one set of 9.25 dollies and one set of 8.25 dollies. Nielsen, who had learned the trade from his father, continued to work with the newly formed company for one year.

Shortly thereafter, Jim secured a government contract with the Sisseton Wahpeton tribe to move 35 pre-built houses to different sites on the reservation. The contract covered the cost of his new company.

In 1965, his wife, Sheri, began doing the bookkeeping. They purchased a 5-bedroom ranch house in Odessa, MN in August of that year. Jim poured the basement in September and the house was moved the end of September 1969. The office for Milbank House Movers was located in their home until 2003 when it was moved to its current location at 1016 South Dakota St. (SD Highway 15) in Milbank, South Dakota. The company was incorporated as Milbank House Movers in 1991.

During this time, the couple raised three children; Chris, Jami, and Josh, all who at one time or another worked for the business and on the family hobby farm where they raised dogs,



2009 IASM President Josh Wendland

cattle, sheep, and traveled showing horses and competing in 4-H and rodeos.

The children were always encouraged to explore, attempt and learn from their interests and ideas, according to Josh. "There was always a lesson to be learned and mistakes were looked at as opportunities," he said.

Neither did the parents believe in "giving" their children money; rather, they always paid them a fair and sometimes generous wage for hard work or an innovative idea.

Chris, the eldest, followed his love of books and learning and is now an attorney in Waterloo, IA. Second-born Jami shares her father's



Josh and his parents, Jim and Sheri Wendland



Josh with his family: wife Susie, and daughters Payton, Stella Jean and Olivia James

By **JACK E. BRYMER, SR.**, Contributing Editor



**Earl Nielsen, Chris and Jim Wendland in 1969 moving Jim and Sheri Wendland's house into place on a new foundation.**

adventurous spirit and her mother's musical talents; consequently, she has always been passionate about music and the arts. She lives in Nashville, TN and is a project manager for Devita Health Care Company. Both siblings are on the Board of Directors of MHM.

For Josh, however, it became a career.

According to his father, Josh never really enjoyed working under the direction of supervisors but always seemed to have good rapport with customers and other trades people. Tired of listening to his son's complaining of working for others and how he thought he could get the job done faster and more efficiently if he could run his own crew, Jim decided to give Josh some reigns and allow him to form his own crew and start moving smaller buildings and houses.

It was a wise move and provided Josh the opportunity to go to college and focus on his studies and "socializing interests" during the



**Chris Wendland, friend Jeff Amdahl (sitting), Jami Wendland and the future IASM president Josh Wendland (age five) in June, 1978.**

school year while working during the summers. He graduated from Moorhead State University in the spring of 1997 and returned to Milbank to work fulltime in the family business, although he continued to run his own crew while learning to deal with customers, permit officials, utility companies and all the other people involved in estimating, scheduling and actually moving houses.

In the spring of 2004, Josh married his wife, Susie, who he had met in college. They have three daughters; Payton, age 6, and twins Stella Jean and Olivia James who have just turned three.

Also in 2004, Josh and Jim purchased a concrete and construction business from Karels Construction and incorporated **MHM Contracting Co.** The company performs concrete and building services for both residential and commercial construction projects. It also performs cooperative projects with the house moving division, which has opened up many projects that would not have been possible otherwise, according to Josh. MHM forecasts a bright future with many opportunities for growth for this company.



On April 1, 2005, **MHM Crane & Rigging, Inc.** was established. "The MHM house of companies is always looking to expand into areas which we feel will bring value to our customers, employees and owners, while still holding true to our founding values and ideals, Josh said.

For example, the floods of 1997 Grand Forks, Fargo, Watertown and Kampeska have created a tremendous need for "raise-ups" while the homes are repaired and new foundations erected.



In addition to houses, MHM has moved bridges, historic buildings, churches, museums, grain elevators and motels.

“The MHM brand of companies is committed to providing quality services that exceed expectations in a friendly, professional, and safe manner,” Josh said. “With the latest technology and continuing education of all employees, coupled with our years of experience, we will achieve the highest standards ensuring our position as a leader in our industries.”

“Additionally our Company has been blessed with talented employees who are committed to advancing their career’s with MHM’s and truly feel pride in their work and the image of our company. Our employees are truly our greatest assets! Here we make every effort to empower our employees in their work responsibilities and to improve their skills by being actively involved in IASM and its programs. The business and technical skills they can learn through IASM’s educational programs are outstanding. I want to encourage all IASM members to include their employees in the association’s activities and watch them succeed,” said Wendland.

*To read the rest of this story and other articles in this issue of Structural Mover, contact IASM for information on Membership. Structural Mover is published by IASM for members. As a member you receive all issues of Structural Mover.*

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**One of the very first moves by the new Milbank House Movers, Inc. company was this house in 1965 for Harvey Hosehagen of Albee, SD.**



**Al Bohn, Shawn Ehlebracht, Jim Wendland and Josh Wendland moved this structure for Tom Livermont to the Whispering Pines Development in Pierre, SD.**



**A 180-ton Bed & Breakfast was moved in Redfield, SD circa 2000.**