



Cheers to 40 Years! Wildeck Celebrates its 40th Anniversary Helping Keep Companies Safe and Efficient

By Hubert (Hue) Schlegel
Director of Marketing – Wildeck, Inc.

Wildeck and Wisconsin share a history that dates back to the mid-1940s.

The company can trace its roots back to Williams Steel and Supply Company, a high quality steel service center that was founded by Herman Williams in Milwaukee in 1944.

One of the products Williams manufactured were custom designed work platforms, which were known as “Wildeck® Mezzanines.” Over time, the Wildeck® Mezzanines continued to grow in popularity with customers looking for extra space in their facilities. These platforms were accounting for such a large part of Williams’ business that the Wildeck Mezzanines division was eventually formed in 1976. Seven years later Wildeck officially incorporated and became Wildeck, Inc. – and we’ve never looked back.

This year marks our 40th year in business, and we don’t intend to slow down any time soon. Not only are our mezzanine platforms, vertical reciprocating conveyors (VRCs) and guarding products still all American-made, but we take great pride in knowing that they’re contributing to making safer working conditions for employees and more effectively protecting equipment in companies around the world.

Our 100,000 square-foot facility boasts precision computer-controlled machinery, including state-of-the-art 600-ton brake press, fully automated paint line and robotic welding. We’re also just completing a building renovation and remodeling project at our Waukesha headquarters, and we’re expecting to create more jobs in the coming years.

Wildeck also owns Ladder Industries, a Goodyear, Arizona, based manufacturer of custom design industrial ladders. Today, Wildeck is a subsidiary of Holden Industries, and is a 100 percent employee-owned ESOP company. Our pride of ownership is reflected in the quality of our products, our dedication to innovation, customer service and safety; after all, a major part of our business is helping you protect your personnel, assets and machinery.

Standing Guard

Though we pride ourselves on innovative products like the EdgeAlert™ Open Gate Alarm System for mezzanines and loading docks, our engineers have also put their design skills to work to improve on a more basic—but essential—safety product: protective guard rail. With no OSHA guidelines outlining its use, guard rail is something that’s often overlooked. Many facilities don’t realize how essential they are for protecting equipment, assets and personnel until it’s too late.

Guard rail is a relatively inexpensive investment, but proves its worth by protecting your people. OSHA estimates that forklift accidents are responsible for roughly 85 fatalities and 35,000 serious injuries each year.

Properly installed guard rail could have prevented many of these accidents by keeping vehicles out of hazardous or off-limits areas—something even the brightest yellow tape can never do.

But it's important to make sure the guard rail you choose can take the hit. Although guard rail options may look similar in appearance, they're not all made the same. If a manufacturer hasn't listed their products' impact ratings, avoid it. It has either never been tested, or failed, an impact test.

Above and Beyond—But Not Through

A loaded forklift generally weighs between 8,000–10,000 pounds, so many guard rail systems are built to withstand a 10,000-pound impact traveling at 4 mph. At Wildeck, we went beyond that, manufacturing our top of the line Wilgard XT to be extra-tough. It's the highest-quality industrial guard rail on the market, with an impact rating of 13,000 pounds traveling at 4 mph, while maintaining a safe zone of 10 inches after impact.

We use corrugated 11 gauge steel for the rails, increasing strength and safety by hemming and smoothing out the top and bottom edges. Many manufacturers skip this step, simply covering rough edges with plastic strips that can eventually easily fall off. We also added strength by using 5" x 5" columns (instead of the more common 4" x 4") and 12" x 12" base plates. Instead of bolting rails to the front of the column, exposing jagged edges, we bolt them to the inside of the column.

As strong as the Wilgard® XT is, we also wanted to offer our customers flexibility—that is, the ability to choose different levels of impact protection for different needs, which is why we now offers three types of guard rail systems, each rated to provide a level of impact protection ideally suited to meet specific safety and budget needs.

- **Wilgard® XT (XTra Tough):** Tested for 13,000 pound impact traveling at 4 mph. 10" safe zone behind rails; recommended for applications involving heavy fork lift traffic.
- **Wilgard® MT (Medium Toughness):** Tested for 10,000 pound impact traveling at 4 mph. 11" safe zone; positioned to compete against other medium grade guard rail at a competitive price.
- **Wilgard® LT (Lighter Toughness):** Ideal for light-duty guarding of work areas and walkways, finished goods staging areas and other similar applications; provides high value at a lower price point.

Strong Partnerships

Companies big and small look to Wildeck for their safety solutions. For example, Precision Gears in neighboring Pewaukee, Wisconsin, choose our Wilgard® guard rail and EdgeGard™ dock gates to upgrade the safety of its loading dock. Wildeck's range of products was able to provide complete safety coverage to multiple doors and access points on the company's horseshoe-shaped dock.

"The goal was to fully protect the area and do it right the first time. We went beyond the OSHA requirements and installed Wildeck products that protect the exposed edges, protect our employees and provide the access we need to get materials into our bay. All of the Wildeck products are working great," said Ronald Vincze, quality manager, Precision Gears.

Over in New England, American Plumbing & Heating of Norwell, Massachusetts, was the first company to incorporate Wildeck's patent-pending EdgeAlert™ Open Gate Alarm on the two sliding gates on their new 4,284 square-foot Wildeck mezzanine platform. For company president Joe Clancy, "The cost of installing the access gates armed with EdgeAlert™ is low, especially when you consider your workers' safety. Not to mention it lowers workman's compensation claims. EdgeAlert™ is a no-brainer."

Wildeck is an American company and we take great pride in the strides we've made in the past 40 years to help make companies operate in a more safe and efficient manner. Cheers to the next 40 years!

Hubert (Hue) Schlegel is the director of marketing at Wildeck, Inc. (www.wildeck.com). He can be reached at 262-549-4000; hschlegel@wildeck.com.

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