



LAUNDRY by RELATIONSHIP

There are 462 Hutterite colonies in North America, 75% of them in Canada. Over 100 of them are in Manitoba, surrounding Winnipeg and other southern cities. The colonies are home to roughly 45,000 people – and they all have laundry.

RELATIONSHIP IS EVERYTHING

Twin-Industry Sales & Service of Winnipeg has worked with several colonies for decades to get equipment needed to facilitate their laundry needs. Emil Solypa, who founded Twin-Industry 61 years ago, developed a very special working relationship with colony leaders that went beyond typical vendor/client interactions. He was considered to be a true friend of the colonies he worked with, and never let them down. "I appreciated his honesty, and respected him as I would a father," said Rosedale Colony leader John Waldner. "We thought of him as family, and he would visit regularly."

With Emil's passing in 2016, the relationship has continued with son Brent, who enjoys the beauty of the countryside around the colonies, and the down-to-earth practicality of the leaders and members. "They were some of my dad's first customers, and have welcomed me as they did him. They have a different way of life and it's amazing the technology stuff that they go for and are getting better at."

WHO ARE THE HUTTERITES?

Unlike the Amish in the U.S., who shun technology in most forms, the Hutterites have adapted their 16th-century way of life to include machinery and

Top: Milltown Colony head electrician and mechanic, Ivan, and John Waldner of Rosedale Colony in the Milltown communal kitchen.

1. A sparkling installation.

2. Plenty of maintenance room, and all lines and drains out of sight.

other equipment that makes that lifestyle easier to maintain. The sect developed in Europe in the 1500s following leader Jacob Hutter, and emphasizes communal ownership of everything, practising their Christianity in daily life, and being pacifists. Persecution has driven them across the globe, with the highest concentration in Canada.

Some things never change, however, like hand-shake business deals and transparency in working with others. "I never ask for one penny down from them," said Solypa. "Their word is as good as gold; when they come they pick up the machines, they give you a cheque and you don't wait for your money to clear." Colonies hear of Solypa's work and contact him, rather than the other way around. "A couple of months ago a colony I had

never dealt with phoned me up. I talked to him for 5–10 minutes and he asked me a little about the machines. He said the other colony said they're good machines, and I'm a good guy to deal with. He asked me for a price, then asked if I was giving him a good price, and I assured him I was. The gentleman said, "I'll give you my verbal order for \$80,000 worth of equipment."

ROSEDALE COLONY

The Rosedale Colony, located 30 miles west of Winnipeg, encompasses 7,000 acres of farming land. The people grow canola, wheat, barley, soy beans, and corn silage and alfalfa for dairy cows. They also raise 25,000 to 30,000 hogs per year, 15,000 egg-laying chickens, 50,000 turkeys, and milk 45 cows twice a day. Approximately 90 men,





Milltown Colony women work their laundry on a schedule.

women and children live in the colony, and hold all assets in common. Cooking and dining are done communally, and laundry facilities are available to all. Generally, when a Hutterite colony reaches 100 people, a new colony is planted elsewhere.

LAUNDRY FOR 90

The washroom is for the whole colony. It includes six washing machines and 2-4 dryers. Each family has an assigned wash day, though the washroom can be used other times if needed and available. Equipment has to hold up to heavy usage, so they buy quality pieces.

"They just don't buy a regular dryer or washer, they want the top line computerized model," said Solypa. "They're looking for driers with the OPTi-dry option, which shuts the dryer off when the load reaches a specific dryness. They choose the most energy efficient dryer and they all like stainless. They finish off the trim around the

The campus of the Milltown Colony is peaceful and spotless.



machines beautifully, and you don't see any water lines, electrical or drains. Really nicely done."

Though decision making on the colonies is done by a the male leaders, especially when it comes to expenditures, the women are definitely consulted for the washroom. "They value the women's input because it's the women that are going to be using the equipment," Solypa said.

UNIMAC BY CHOICE

"We've had UniMac for as long as I can remember," said John Waldner. "The quality of the machines has constantly improved over the years, and we've always been extremely satisfied with their performance. UniMac has been very good for the community through the years." That doesn't prevent him from asking around at other colonies about their equipment, but UniMac still wins in his book.

The laundry hall at Rosedale Colony was renovated in March 2018. It includes a UniMac 40-lb. soft-mount high-speed washer/extractor, a 30-lb. soft-mount high-speed washer/extractor, 4 UX 20-lb. soft-mount washers and a UX 35-lb. soft-mount washer. UniMac electric dryers round out the package.

NICHE MARKET

The Hutterite colonies make up an interesting niche market that Twin-Industry and other companies have been able to serve for many years. Loyalty is a byword with Hutterites, and once a vendor has established its credibility, the relationship is likely to be a long one. "I'm proud to be welcomed at the colonies, and to be able to serve them in this way," said Solypa. ■

ROSEDALE COLONY INSTALLATION



1. Rosedale Colony leader John Waldner and family members relax at home.

2. A laundry for 90 people is kept busy continually. John is the colony's electrician, plumber and refrigeration expert.

3. Brent Solypa (right) with John after the successful installation of the laundry facility's new equipment.

4. Rosedale Colony is a busy agricultural site. 5. Rosedale Colony campus.