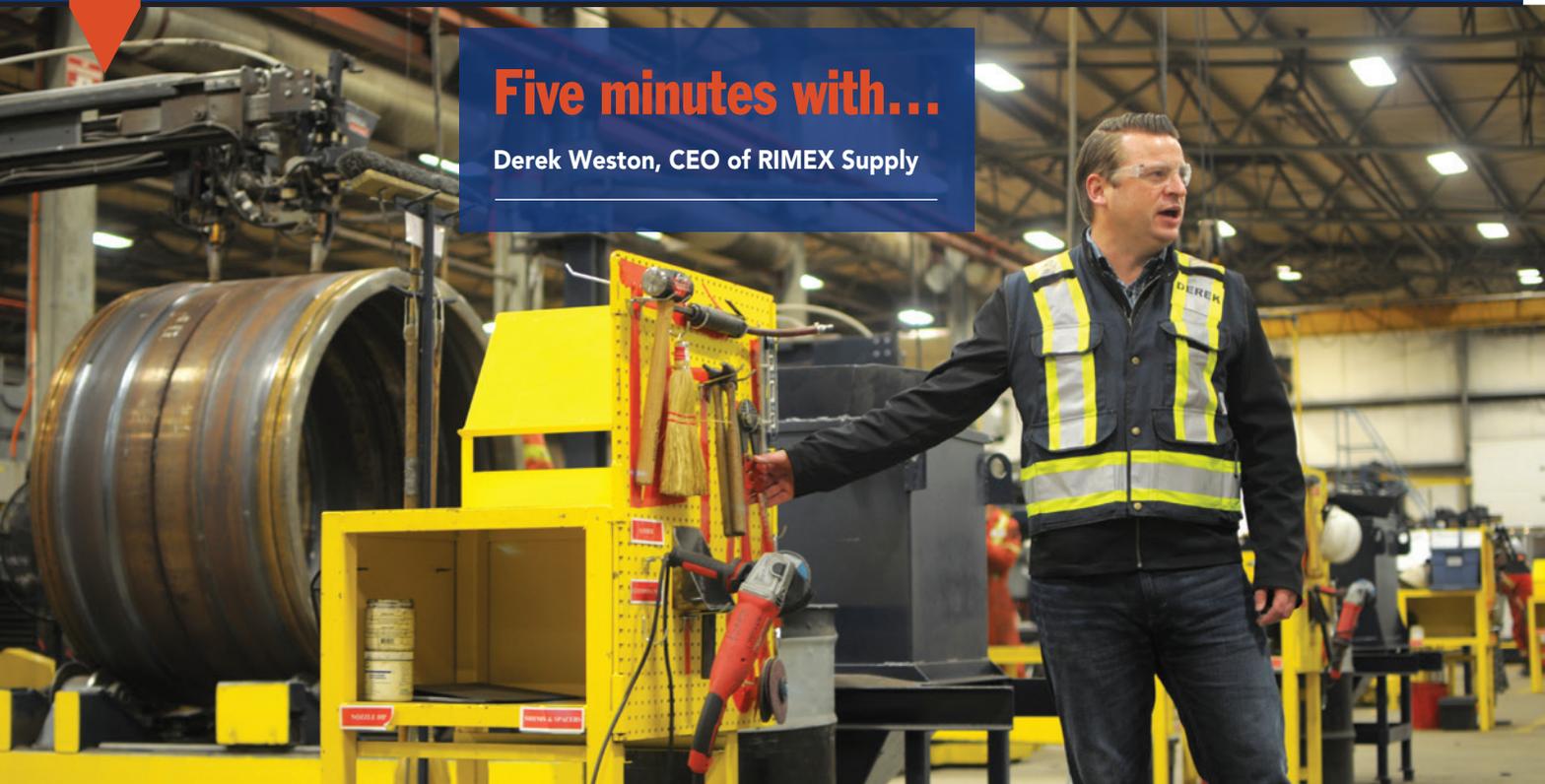


Five minutes with...

Derek Weston, CEO of RIMEX Supply



Congratulations on reaching the 40-year milestone! What changes has RIMEX seen in the mining industry during that time?

Over these past 40 years we've responded to a whole range of changes and challenges in the mining industry, constantly developing new standards for wheels, rims and specialised accessories.

As the industry has grown, so have the haulers, loaders and other vehicles. Bigger trucks have meant larger and stronger wheels. Our design and manufacturing has had to keep pace. Among the demands we've faced, for example, was the introduction of radial tyres. We designed an exceptional solution in our Taper Secure Radial (TSR) series, which uses a taper concept to secure all rim components in place. The key benefits of the TSR design are absolute tyre support and extended tyre life.

Our innovative rims – the Double Gutter Service (DGS) Series (1999) and Integral Gutter Lock Ring (IGLR) Series (2002) – have realised significant time and cost savings, with dramatic increases in efficiency and safety. Before the DGS, the outer tyre and wheel had to be completely removed from the truck in order to change an inner dual tyre; but with DGS, dual tyres can be easily mounted or demounted vertically without removing the outer wheel. The result is a safe tyre change that is completed in a fraction of the time compared with conventional products and methods.

We followed Australia's proactive lead with the AS 4457.1 guidelines (1997) for wheel inspection, repair and mounting/demounting procedures. These are industry best practices that we've adopted worldwide for superior wheel and rim maintenance, along with reduced costs.

In the last 15 years, RIMEX has also entered the inner world of tyres, with the development of 'TyreSense', a best-of-class temperature and pressure monitoring system (TPMS) that provides comprehensive data tracking and recording, objective data analysis and custom options for our mining-company customers.

But maybe the most important evolution over the past few decades has been the focus on safety in the workplace. It's more than just 'following the rules'; it's promoting a safety culture that permeates our company and our industry. Safety simply has to be our number one priority.

What do you think are currently the main trends?

Autonomous heavy-haul trucks will become the norm. Positioning capability and accuracy will have to be improved, independent of GPS systems, but the cost savings alone make the transition inevitable.

With regard to TPMS technology, our vision is one where all conceivable tyre and wheel data is continuously tracked and monitored, enabling the most advanced tyre and fleet-management systems possible.

Has the downturn in the mining industry affected the demand for tyres and related products? For example, do you see an increased focus on monitoring and preventative maintenance?

Declining commodity prices have dictated that mines be more efficient and lean. RIMEX itself has adopted the principles of 'lean production', a systematic method for eliminating waste within our manufacturing system.

Preventative monitoring is key to efficiency and sustainability. Capitalising on our TyreSense TPMS technology, we see a number of promising developments:

- Automated tyre inflation significantly reduces the downtime of mechanical or manual airing up – it delivers uninterrupted air flow and protects personnel from potentially hazardous situations;
- Geo-fencing uses GPS to define virtual perimeters at work sites, including speed zones, loading zones and no-go zones – this will improve the efficiency of mining operations and preserve the safety of their work sites;
- The TyreSense system is also evolving into a comprehensive asset-management system, integrating all aspects of tyre and fleet management, from tyre tread depth, wear and history, to actual hours-in-motion measurements and tyre manufacturer comparisons.

What is in the future for RIMEX?

The future holds more challenges, which are simply more opportunities for success. We've made it this far by listening to our customers and satisfying their needs for innovative, effective and proven solutions.

We'll continue to grow globally, hand-in-hand with our worldwide mining partners. It's gratifying to look back over our history, but even better to look ahead to our future.

Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

A huge thanks to our customers and collaborators for making our 40-year milestone a reality, and helping make RIMEX a continuing success story.