

## **HISTORY OF LIGHTWEIGHT DISTRIBUTING COMPANY**

**In the early 1970's there were three manufacturers of lightweight aggregate in the upper Midwest; "Materialite" manufactured by Material Service Company in the Chicago area by a large Aggregate and Ready Mix Corporation. "Noonlite" manufactured in Mandan, North Dakota by a small privately owned company and "Aglite" manufactured in Plymouth, Minnesota by a small privately owned company.**

**Most lightweight aggregate is produced in a plant similar to that of Portland cement, mining clay and other materials, crushing or pulverizing the minerals then running the material through a rotary Kiln, crushed and graded. Aglite used an old method called "Cindering Grate". Clay was palletized, mixed with Petroleum Koch, spread on a traveling grate, ignited where large fans sucked air through the ignited material as it traveled down the grate conveyor. When it reached the end of the conveyor it fell off the grate into a water pond. Both methods create a lot of pollution.**

**In the 1970's the Pollution Control Agencies began to pressure the lightweight aggregate producers to meet the same standards that they had enforced on the cement manufacturers. We all had witnessed the problems and cost of cleaning up the cement plants. The lightweight aggregate producers were faced with large capital expenses to de-pollute their plants.**

**In 1972 the owners of Aglite decided that they would rather go out of business than spend the money to clean up their plant. Anchor Block Company, a St. Paul, Minnesota concrete block producer, bought the Aglite plant. They did so to preserve a supply of lightweight aggregate for the production of lightweight masonry products. It was at that time that they hired John Hrkal as vice president and general manager. John's responsibility was to get the plant in compliance with the pollution standards and overall plant operations.**

**In 1975 Noonlite closed their plant in Mandan and in 1976 Materialite also closed their plant in Chicago. The closing of these plants put additional pressure on Aglite to take up the slack and**

**produce more lightweight aggregate. Aglite spent millions of dollars in a futile effort to increase the production and de-pollute the plant. There were shortages of lightweight aggregate in the upper Midwest. The owners of Aglite needed to find more sources of lightweight aggregate to satisfy the demand.**

**John Hrkal was asked to find these other sources. He looked at the other manufacturers in the United States and in Spain. We also looked at natural lightweight aggregate being mined in Greece.**

**In 1976 Aglite made a deal with Arkalite, a manufacturing plant in West Memphis Arkansas, to supply Aglite with lightweight aggregate, however, they would only sell Aglite 1/2" structural material. This would help but not satisfy our need for more block fines. In 1977 Arkalite agreed to sell Aglite block fines, but in limited quantities. In late 1978 Arkalite agreed to sell Aglite as much lightweight as they needed.**

**Aglite needed to make a decision, should they continue to try to meet pollution standards or close the plant and develop the land. Anchor Block decided to shut the plant down. They also made the decision not to continue as a broker of lightweight if John Hrkal would become the broker and distribute Arkalite in the Midwest.**

**In 1978 John Hrkal Incorporated a company called "Lightweight Distributing Company" and began distributing lightweight aggregate manufactured by Arkalite.**

**In 2003 Lightweight Distributing bought out West Materials, a distributor in the Midwest that distributed Gravelite. Gravelite is produced in Louisiana by Big River Industries.**

**In 2005 Big River Industries purchased Arkalite.**

**Lightweight Distributing thus acquired another source of lightweight aggregate to distribute. Lightweight Distributing Company remains as the largest source of lightweight aggregates in the upper Midwest.**

**On January 1, 2007 Lightweight Distributing Company was bought**

**by Craig A.Hrkal from John W. Hrkal. John W. Hrkal remains as a technical assistant and V-P of sales with the compnay.**