

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

9/26/2012

Floral Plant Growers Acquires Hiebert Greenhouses

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When *GrowerTalks* was in South Dakota during the spring of 2003, one of the places we visited was Hiebert Green-houses, a good-sized third-generation operation in Sioux Falls. In an editorial about the young owners, Charles and Jolene Masloski, Chuck expressed frustration at the challenges of running a small business. When we asked what he was doing to prepare the business for the fourth generation (2-year-old Alexis, who was busy playing on the office floor), Chuck replied, “We’re trying to sell it. I don’t want my kids to do this.”

Nine years later, the Masloskis have sold the family business, to Floral Plant Growers of Denmark, Wisconsin. FPG is owned by Blue Point Capital Partners of Charlotte, Seattle, Cleveland and Shanghai.

Why now, and why to FPG? Jolene, granddaughter of founder Peter Hiebert, answered questions via email.

As for the why, she explained that their customer base had been changing in recent years and they were searching for market options. One option: sell the business. Discussions with fellow upper-Midwest grower Floral Plant Growers turned in that direction, and “The rest is now history,” she wrote.

As for selling an 80-year-old family business, she admits it’s hard to see that end, but added, “... it is also rewarding to see it move to the next level, which FPG is doing.”

She says she and Chuck will stay on to assist the transition. “We are all pleased and excited about the future. It’s not a culmination of [what Chuck said] nine years ago—just a matter of perfect timing.”

For FPG’s perspective, we communicated with FPG President and CEO Scott Lueder via email. Scott told me the acquisition of the 20-acre (give or take) Hiebert facility allows them to meet increasing demands from existing customers in that market. The purchase gives FGP some 68 acres of greenhouse in Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa and now South Dakota. **GT**