

Loss Of Sight No Barrier To Minnesota Equipment Dealer

Edwin Riege sees nothing unusual about his decision to start his own business at the age of 46. "It has been a lifelong ambition and I made up my mind. There was no reason to delay any longer," he says simply.

But there are a few things that make his venture into private enterprise out of the ordinary. Riege is blind. And the type of business he is entering would seem to present inordinate challenges.

He is about to become a service dealer for The Toro Company. Riege's company will sell and service powered lawn mowers and snow removal equipment and sell miscellaneous tools and hardware.

Toro has no other service dealers who are blind and Riege may well be the first blind person in the nation to operate such a business.

His company, Ed's Engines, Parts & Supplies, Inc., occupies half of a single-story building on the main street of North St. Paul, one of the oldest suburbs of the Twin Cities.

Riege concedes that making a success of his business will not be easy. But he's optimistic. "Toro has a good reputation, especially in this region," he said. "I sold two machines, even before opening."

Indirectly, Riege has been preparing for a career as a sales-oriented, independent businessman since he lost his sight in 1966 from detached retinas, which resulted in the removal of one eye and total blindness in the other.

After losing his sight, he completed a seven-month training program operated by the Minnesota Society for the Blind, a course in political science from the University of Minnesota Extension Service and studied business administration for a year at Lakewood State Junior College. He also spent 3½ weeks in training with a guide dog with Seeing Eye, Inc. in Morristown, N. J., after which he returned to North St. Paul with his dog, Poppins, who has given him "expanded mobility."

Riege had planned to return to Lakewood but had difficulty obtaining needed text books and decided, instead, to seek employment, his first since losing his vision.

Since October, 1969, while working with the mortuary, he also completed a Dale Carnegie course and was elected vice president and program chairman of the North St. Paul Lions Club.

"When I decided that I was

ready to go into business for myself," Riege recalled, "I had a long talk with the manager of the local Chamber of Commerce.

"We considered a number of things, including a telephone answering service. Most of the ideas seemed mundane until we learned that the town needed a shop providing parts and repairs for small engines. That appealed to me. I had always been handy with tools and I had worked for 17 years with a wholesale hardware company where I learned a few things about inventory control and pricing."

After he decided hardware was the business for him, Riege called Minnesota Toro, Inc., the distributor for Toro products in this area.

Riege attended a recent meeting held by the distributor to introduce the 1974 line of Toro consumer products. "I've never seen anyone so enthusiastic," observed Charles Leonhart, distributor sales representative. "He climbed all over every piece of equipment and asked more questions than anyone."

Initially, Riege's company will have only two full-time employees, himself and Floyd Bailey. Bailey, who has operated an outdoor power equipment engine repair service and is known in the community as "the mower man," will be the service manager. There also will be two part-time employees.

Riege believes that with a minimal amount of special training he can handle engine repairs. "I've never had any trouble keeping my own power mower in good running order," he said, "but I think I'll leave that end of the business to Floyd. I expect I'll be kept pretty busy with other matters, especially selling."

His determination to make a success of his business, Riege said, stems in part from the generous help he has received from various public agencies. A state government agency which aids the blind has purchased for him a Braille calculator and cash register, an electric typewriter, office furniture and special security devices, including a burglar alarm system. The SBA has guaranteed a loan from the First State Bank of North St. Paul for the purchase of inventory.

"With that kind of help and a name like Toro backing me, I don't see how I can fail," he declared.

Color Coding Reduces Shop Accidents

"As a way to help avoid accidents, take time to color code your shop according to the American Standards Association recommendations," says Dorrell Larsen, University of Idaho extension agricultural engineer."

Color codes are:

—**Red** which marks the location of fire fighting equipment and identifies emergency stops on equipment.

—**Alert Orange** which is used on parts of machines that can cut, crush, shock or otherwise injure. Examples are guards on exposed gears, cutting devices and fuse box interiors.

—**High Visibility Yellow** which indicates caution and designates hazards from bumping, falling, tripping or collision as floor area around machinery, aisles and handrails.

—**Safety Green** which is used on first aid and safety equipment in the shop.

—**Precaution Blue** which is used on all equipment controls to remind yourself to be cautious.

In addition to color coding, Larsen urges that when working in the shop, "be alert to the causes of shop accidents and the tools or operations most apt to cause mishaps."

The arms and hands are parts of the body most often injured in shop accidents. They account for 36 percent of all injuries.

The percentage of injuries to other parts of the body in shop accidents include chest, stomach, and hips, 25 percent; feet, 12; legs, 12; head, 10; and other, 5 percent.

Kerb Herbicide Price Reduced Says Rohm And Haas

Rohm and Haas Company, Philadelphia, Pa., has announced a substantial price decrease for its Kerb 50-W herbicide. This price decrease is effective August 1, 1973.

Kerb 50-W has pre- and postemergence activity on many weed species and a high degree of turfgrass safety. It was initially marketed in southern states for control of *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) in bermudagrass turf.

For additional information on Kerb 50-W herbicide, contact E. H. Boeckel, Agricultural and Sanitary Chemicals Department, Rohm and Haas Company, Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, Pa. 19105.