



BOX SCORE

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A hand is shown in the lower-left foreground, with the index finger pointing towards a bright, glowing light source. From this light source, numerous colorful, fiber-optic-like trails of light radiate outwards, filling the background with a sense of energy and movement. The colors range from warm yellows and oranges to cool blues and purples.

A FORCE FOR INDEPENDENTS

Longtime members reflect on the legacy and continuing impact of AICC 50 years running

ALSO INSIDE

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Much Ado About AI
50 Years of AICC: 1980–1993

Buffalo Leadership

Living in Colorado my whole life, I have always been intrigued by the buffalo. My fascination began with our family tradition of attending University of Colorado football games. These years were extra special watching Dave DeLine (now fourth-generation owner of DeLine Box) as the team's starting kicker and upsetting No. 3 Nebraska, including a 57-yard field goal. The University of Colorado's mascot is the buffalo, and we always enjoyed the start of the game when a live buffalo named Ralphie would run the field. I have always been in awe of the buffalo's majesty and strength.

There is a great deal of folklore associated with the buffalo in the West. Wyoming's state flag features a buffalo appearing to face the wrong way. The intention of the flag is to display how the buffalo always heads into the storm. The buffalo, unlike a cow or other animals, possesses a natural instinct to confront storms rather than retreat from them. The buffalo understands the storm will be shorter when it passes directly through it, whereas the cow runs away from the storm and gets caught up in it for much longer.

As business leaders, we can learn from the buffalo's unwavering commitment to face challenges head-on. Buffalo leadership emphasizes the importance of looking out for one another. In the face of a storm, buffaloes form a protective circle, with the older and more experienced ones on the perimeter shielding the vulnerable members within. This selfless act prioritizes the well-being and growth of team members. Leaders who prioritize the needs of their team and create a supportive environment foster a culture in which everyone feels valued and protected.

Understanding that challenges are inevitable and how we respond to those challenges is what sets us apart, many box plants have enjoyed a lot of success in recent years due to unique conditions in the marketplace. We may be in for a tougher year, and we can learn from the buffalo as it displays a remarkable resiliency during storms. As leaders, we guide our team through adversity by staying focused on our goals and steering clear of distractions that may hinder our progress. As independents, we have always thrived by building resilient organizational cultures. We embrace change, we are agile, and we demonstrate a sense of perseverance among team members.

Adopt the spirit of the buffalo, and you can help your team not only survive the storm but emerge stronger on the other side.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew M. Davis".

Matthew M. Davis
President, Packaging Express
AICC Chairman

