

Ralph Nafziger
Hammond's Candies
 RCI board member profile



Ralph Nafziger with some of Hammond's whirl lollipops

A few years of working as an auditor for Arthur Andersen & Company branded him for life, says Ralph Nafziger. He's now the vice president of operations of Hammond's Candies (Denver, Colorado) and a member of the board of directors at Retail Confectioners International (RCI), but that earlier experience impressed on him the importance of being detail minded and inquisitive.

Nafziger worked in management positions at other companies and could have become a small business consultant with the broad variety of professional experience he possesses. Instead he entered the tasty world of confectionery production about 10 years ago and hasn't looked back.

Nafziger's first foray into the confectionery industry was with Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory. While there he was introduced to Hammond's candy canes. When the opportunity to purchase Hammond's arose, he was ready to combine his talents with those of other stockholders to lead Hammond's into its next stage.

Hammond's Candies produces mainly hard candies that are sold through small retailers, catalog and chain outlets such

as Williams-Sonoma, Bed, Bath & Beyond and Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory. In addition, Hammond's has a retail factory outlet store and a seasonal kiosk at a local mall. The company's most popular confections are candy canes and whirl lollipops.

Nafziger, his associates Bob List and Linda Fasano, and others bought the closely held confectionery company in 1997. Several other employees are shareholders as well.

The highlight of his association with Hammond's has been last year's successful move to a larger, updated facility in Denver, approximately five miles from the former factory. The additional space and new technology was needed to enable the company to reach its growth goals.

The company gives tours through its candy-making, packaging and shipping departments.

Nafziger says, "Our factory is not as big as Malley's Chocolates in Ohio but our tour does feature a complete walk-through. In addition, we leave the top of the viewing path open so that visitors can breathe in the pungent, tantalizing smells."

The factory utilizes



Hammond's new facility in Denver, Colorado