Carisch, Inc. is a Minnesota based company that owns and manages multiple Arby's® restaurants. The company started in 1990 with one Arby's location. Through hard work and excellence, brothers George and Jerry Carisch have grown their business to more than 70 Arby's restaurants across seven states.

The payrolls for all of their Arby's locations along with three separate entities are managed by the corporate office. Carisch had been managing their complex, multiple company payrolls for many years with Libra Payroll, a system by GEAC Computer Corporation. The system was powerful and had aptly handled their growing needs for many years, but the DOS based system had reached the end of its lifecycle. It was time to conduct a search for a new payroll system.

CFO Mark Gregory and Controller Janice Carlson began the search for a new payroll application. They started out by looking at a few of the very high end, in-house software applications, in the price range of around $200,000. They noticed that many of these large applications, despite their large price tag, still weren't flexible, and the yearly maintenance costs were around $40,000 per year. Though they never looked too deeply into payroll services, they estimated those yearly costs to be $40,000 to $50,000. Then Mark read a review in the CPA Technology Advisor magazine, where Red Wing Software's CenterPoint Payroll Software had received an excellent review. He decided to investigate the company and software further.

Since Carisch used a human resources management program in addition to (and separate from) their payroll software, this resulted in double entry of employees into both systems. And with 1,800 employees hired each year, significant time could be saved by streamlining that process. In addition, the company needed a time import function to pull time clock punches directly into the payroll system. Red Wing Software was able to accommodate this need by pulling the new employee information into the payroll system directly

from the HR system and time clock, so double entry of employee information was eliminated. Carisch also had more than 300 employees whose wages were being garnished. "We were impressed with Red Wing Software's flexibility in calculating these complex wage garnishments," says Mark Gregory.

Minimizing the number of screens necessary to complete processes was another crucial feature for Carisch. "There are far fewer screens to get through in CenterPoint in order to get things done," says Janice Carlson, "It's very user friendly. There are only about six screens to get through in CenterPoint to complete a payroll, and that's including direct deposit. Some other systems are so polluted with different screens, fields and tabs to get through. CenterPoint helps us get things done faster." They also liked the simplicity of easily switching from keyboard to mouse functions, to improve efficiency.

Mark and Janice were also pleased with the reporting capability of CenterPoint Payroll. "There are a lot of standard reports available," says Mark, "But creating your own custom reports is also easy." Janice expanded by saying, "A payroll system is only as good as the information you can pull out of it. CenterPoint saves us time by making our reporting more efficient." With Carisch's legacy payroll system, it almost took a programmer to generate a report. The Carisch staff feels that the ad hoc reporting in CenterPoint is probably the software's major strength.

Carisch decided to go with Red Wing Software and CenterPoint Payroll. Red Wing Software imported employee data from their Libra software, and they ran payroll on both systems parallel for an entire month, until they felt comfortable things were running smoothly and accurately. Training was completed online with a Red Wing Software technician. "Response times are critical for us," says Janice, "Our payroll is 100% direct deposit, and we must have the payroll data to the bank before the required cutoff time. So response time was especially crucial when we first started, and continues to be important. We were very pleased to find that Red Wing Software's customer support always reacts quickly."