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December 2018

Wow, What a Year!

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At Christmas time we celebrate the birth of our Savior, the true gift from above. We also exchange gifts to remind us of this true gift and our gratitude for so much that is done for us. As we reflect on 2018, we are overwhelmed with appreciation toward all of you who have contributed to AFI's success.



Because of all your efforts in working with us, we've been able to improve our service by adding a weekend shift, a truck route to Iowa, an additional blast room in Litchfield, additional concrete in Litchfield, a complete new roof in Mankato, and a packing/masking room. Ground preparation is also underway for a building expansion this spring. If you're getting this newsletter, you're a customer, vendor, employee, or friend who's been a part of this success so we want to thank you.

This year we've undertaken a management process known as EOS (Entrepreneurial Operating System). As part of this process, we had to identify our Core Focus. We had to ask ourselves, "Why does AFI exist?". The obvious answer is, "to paint parts" but we were forced to look deeper to figure out what has made us successful for 66 years and what will continue to make us successful. After reviewing our history and a lengthy debate, we identified our Core Focus as: "Generations of Family, Opportunity, and Relationships".

That's why our connections are so important to us and our appreciation is strong for you. We value our relationships and feel like a family as we create opportunities together. We thank you for being a part of the AFI family and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year as we head into 2019!

John & Ted

Masking Bonanza

The amount of jobs that require of-line processes is growing at AFI and the room to finish these jobs is growing as well. AFI has created a new sectioned-off room totally dedicated to masking and offline work. The idea is to keep the paint lines running as much as possible by moving the bottle neck processes to the offline area. These processes include masking, unmasking, after-paint clean up, racking, and some packaging. Keeping these processes together with a specialized team helps the through-put and accuracy of our customer orders.



Many of the jobs that make it into the offline area require an extreme attention to detail and this space is specifically set up for that. The individual stations are complete with masking tools, clean up tools, tape cutters, and die-cut roll holders. The adjustable tables with wheels lend themselves to the ever changing work that comes through our doors. Some projects require us to group tables together to make assembly lines while other projects are done on an individual basis. This room can morph into the perfect set up for that day. The room also has bright white walls and is equipped with fantastic lighting. The lighting is great for the detailed work and the inspection of finished product. The offline room has been a great addition to the AFI facility; the only concern we have is did we make it big enough?

Another Year Gone

Another year is gone already, but there were many good memories to share.



John & Ted introduced everyone to EOS at the kick-off meeting



Diamond Vogel's, Reese Kelch, volunteered to smoke pork this fall for the whole company!



The all-employee picnic this summer was another hit!



The pick-up truck got a fresh new look!

The Litchfield Corner

The AFI Litchfield facility has officially been open for two years now. 2018 has again brought new additions to the team and especially the equipment in the facility. Efficiency is the name of the game in Litchfield and 2018 has brought many improvements to racking and floor space. We have also added a 140' x 40' pad of concrete in our loading area outside of the building to help our process run smoothly.



Over the past year, the Litchfield facility has seen some major growth in business. We have had to match that growth with staffing and equipment. One of the major equipment additions to the facility is the third blast room that is being installed in December. This blast room is thirty feet long and will shoot steel grit media. This investment is addressing our biggest bottleneck in Litchfield over the past year and it will be up and running by mid-December.

Focusing on plant efficiency has been a major undertaking this year. There have been improvements to rack design for a few different projects that have cut our handling time down dramatically. Many times, it is the large projects that make sense to design new racking, but everything we design has thoughts about how to reuse it on a variety of projects. We have also gained floor space by reorganizing and using the new concrete pad outside to store unused racks.

The addition of the expanded concrete loading area has been a very good investment thus far. It has about doubled our usable space to turn around, unload trucks, and store racks. It is especially helpful in the spring when the old loading area would get very soft from the thaw of the frost and cause issues with vehicles.

Clearing Ground

Preparations are being made at the AFI- Mankato facility for an expansion. PEM, AFI's sister company, will be building a new facility on the lot to showcase their paint pretreatment equipment. The new building will have a state-of-the-art training center for all-things pretreatment. PEM currently uses some space within the AFI building as well as another building on the property. This project will allow AFI to move into these spaces gaining critical room to expand operations.

