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Focusing on Growth

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Collin Schreyer
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The goal is to always have at least 20% more capacity than we currently need. This mindset always allows AFI room to grow and continue to look for new opportunities. Throughout the last couple of years AFI has put together an expansion project that will increase capacity over the next several years. The most recent projects have given us added capacity on our largest production lines.

As AFI is always trying to keep an eye on the future, we have made plans to expand the business in the years to come through short and long term planning. Some of these plans are capital-based while others are employee and process-based. All of the plans have one idea in mind, increase the capacity to decrease the lead times. We know that it is not as easy as just adding an oven or paint booth. Our systems also need to improve over time including the quality, purchasing, and movement of information. As we move into the future, all of these projects will be analyzed and improved with the goal that AFI is easier to work with than ever.

One of these projects was to implement a full weekend shift to increase our capacity and help with quick turn times. The weekend shift is now run in Mankato at both the Mallard and Rock St. facilities. It is focused on our two largest capacity lines to keep us ahead of our scheduled long-run work. Most of the jobs run on these lines have few masking requirements and are longer runs to keep up the efficiency of the line that is required. Our weekend employees enjoy working the three 12-hour shifts while having Monday through Thursday off.

Transition in Quality

There are many transitions that take place within a company's history and AFI's quality department is in the midst of one of those transitions. Over the past 28 years, Alan Baer has developed AFI's quality system to fit the needs of our growing company. As Alan is pulling back the reins on his successful AFI career, Collin Schreyer is jumping in head first. We have long planned on this transition and hope it goes as smoothly for our customers as it has internally.



Alan Baer started with AFI in 1991 to develop our paint stripping process and soon took on the quality control responsibilities as well. We use the stripping process to not only strip our paint line hooks, but also fix parts that need to be reworked for a variety of reasons. The jump from process engineer of paint stripping to quality lead was a natural progression. He had all of the experience working with rejected parts and began to drill down to root causes of these rejects. Fast forward 28 years and Alan still continues to learn and develop new processes with the ever evolving paint market. We have relied on those years of experience working with rejected parts to get to root causes quickly and fix the issues. Along the way, Alan has always done a great job in teaching and documenting the knowledge he has gained helping us adapt and grow quicker as a company.

Alan has currently started to wind down on his career and beginning to look forward to his retirement years. He spends three and a half days per week in the office splitting his time between quality and process engineer. After he fully passes off his quality responsibilities, he will continue to work part-time developing new processes for the foreseeable future.

Collin Schreyer will be stepping into the role of Quality Lead to continue to push the department forward. Collin is originally from Mankato and is fresh out of the Marine Corps where he held the position of Quality Assurance for the past three years. His attention to detail and commitment to fixing issues makes him a great fit for the position. He also has previous experience at AFI as he has held a variety of positions on the paint line while he was getting his education. He began his transition into the quality role mid-May and will continue to take responsibilities off of Alan's plate over the next few months.



Collin's Contact Info:

507-385-2776 cschreyer@associatedfinishing.com

The Litchfield Corner

Seasoned Employee, New Opportunity

Travis Lemke has been with the AFI—Litchfield facility since the beginning and has now taken the opportunity to lead the day-to-day operations. He started in March of 2017 as the blaster of the facility and it was apparent immediately that he would be the reliable and flexible employee that we needed to get this facility on the right path. Over the last two years, he has performed all of the major production jobs within the facility and has become a natural leader. He began officially leading the Litchfield facility in early 2019 and has already made improvements in the scheduling and lead times. His hands-on experience gives him the advantage in training employees, knowing the equipment, and upholding our quality standards. Travis has provided great insight to the business and is leading the way in our work-flow efficiencies and communication in Litchfield.



On a personal note, Travis is originally from the St. Cloud area and continues to live in the area with his girlfriend, Anne, and their two children. On his days off, he enjoys working on motorcycles, hunting, woodworking and fishing. One of his favorite places to fish in the summer is Mille Lacs, but that's the only specifics he'll give about his hot spot!

Travis's Contact Info: 320-326-1102 litchfieldplant@associatedfinishing.com

Spring Cleaning

The AFI- Mallard plant received a much needed facelift this spring! Complete with new siding and lighting, the improvements have really brightened up the appearance. AFI has had a history of expansion, especially to the building. The original production space of the main building was about half of the current production space. The latest facelift brought a sharp uniformity to the building that was needed. The building was also fitted with some new windows to help keep us warm during the next Polar Vortex!



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