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Quality
Alan Baer
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OR
Christine Doering
866-345-5861 ext. 212

BREAKING NEWS ON EXPANSION AT AFI

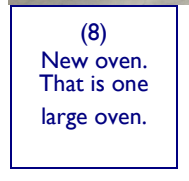
In the December Newsletter we told you about AFI's expansion project. We have leased another building which brings our total production space to 52,000 square feet. Our new facility has a 6 stage (70 foot) PEM Custom Pretreatment System using RO water to improve salt spray and reduce chemical usage. This system will almost double our capacity to handle large volume orders. The new line has over 700 feet of track which can run up to 6 feet per minute. We have added 200 additional feet of cooling which will be best suited for dense or heavy parts. The powder booths are designed for quick color changes. Our new location supervisor will be Mike Barton. As you view the pictures in this article, we show the progress since December. AFI II (the sequel) is in full production. We want to thank our many customers that have been so patient with us during this time of transition. It is our customers that motivate us to improve and expand to meet their needs. You are welcome to come down any time for a visit and a tour. Special thank you to all the vendors that helped make this happen. Skogen Mechanical, Electric Services LLC, Blue Earth Environmental, Riverfront Technologies, McGowan Water Conditioning, CenterPoint Energy, Xcel Energy, City of Mankato, Greater Mankato Growth, and United Prairie Bank.



(5&6) New automated line is added.



(7) 6 stage PEM Custom Pretreatment system ready for the first parts to paint .



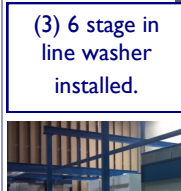
(8) New oven. That is one large oven.



(1) Adding lighting to the building.



(2) Equipment arriving for installation.



(3) 6 stage in line washer installed.



(4) New Paint booths installed.



(9) The RO water system to give us the cleanest parts before painting.

Ted Schreyer and John Kapsner painting the first parts on the new line. They still remember how!



Butterfly Art at AFI



A sign of Spring at AFI

We don't just mask, pretreat and paint—we once in a while get the chance to be a bit creative!!!



Retirement for Phyllis

We like to celebrate milestones at AFI. We honored Phyllis Olfert for her 10 years of service at AFI January 2013. Phyllis became an AFI employee after she retired from the county where she worked for 35 years. Phyllis was always there to help if you needed it. She filled in around the plant where needed, and will be missed. But I understand she is on her third jigsaw puzzle and is spending more time with her grandchildren and scrapbooking. Good Luck Phyllis! Rumor has it she may come back from time to time if we need her....wait I have already spotted her at AFI twice. We miss you Phyllis. ENJOY!



Kaizen: Japanese word meaning continuous change

Associated Finishing employees are given opportunities to submit their performed Kaizen. Employees find ways that save time and money to get parts shipped faster with good quality. The Kaizen program has proven over again that lean practices and implementation are worthwhile; not only to our customers but to AFI also. In January we awarded 4 employees (See picture below) with Kaizen ideas. We thank these employees for implementing their practical ideas that work on the floor to make their jobs easier and cost savings to our customers and AFI. We appreciate you all.

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KAIZEN CORNER



Kaizen winners for January (Left to right) Becky Baer, Larry Olfert, Connie Kump. (Larry Myking missing from photo).

Behind the Scenes Look at AFI's Team (SNEAK PEEK)

This month we are featuring Alan Baer our Process Engineer and Quality Manager. Al, thank you for allowing us to feature you as the third SNEAK PEEK employee.

It was more than 21 years ago that Alan Baer answered AFI's ad looking to hire a stripper and life has never been the same since! "It's not what you think!" says Baer who's been explaining the situation for the last two decades. AFI was looking to expand their ability to strip paint and Alan, with his background in industrial engineering, was the right man for the job. "I joined AFI to strip paint," says Alan, "fully dressed!"

Now, twenty some years later, it's unfortunate but most of you don't get to meet Alan until there is a problem with one of your parts. Alan currently is our Process Engineer and the guy who spearheads quality matters so he's the guy to call if you have reject issues. Those initial meetings could be uncomfortable but after people get to know him, they find that Alan works very hard for them to get the problem resolved.

Starting out at AFI by developing a paint stripping department and stripping methods, Alan acquired a thorough understanding of our internal rejects and also rejects our customers were struggling with. By stripping work for other painters, we got to see not only our own problems but also problems that other painters were struggling with. That background gave him a perfect foundation for coordinating our quality efforts and processing methods.

Alan helps us do all the prep work to set up special processes in our plant to streamline jobs. Not only is he constantly developing fixtures and custom masking, but he also does most of the documentation and testing to keep things flowing smoothly. He involves everyone in the plant in his work and coordinates our Kaizen program and our Lean Manufacturing efforts.

On a personal note, Alan is married to his wife Becky of 45 years and they have two daughters and four grandsons. They live next to Madison Lake and spend as much time there as they can with their grandchildren. Alan also is a facilitator for Financial Peace University and has helped many people reach financial stability in their lives.

When asked what Alan likes most about his job he immediately responds, "The people". Alan comments that our organization has integrity, honesty and just good people throughout. He says, "Everyone's got a job to do, they do it, and if they need help, we all pitch in." When asked what he likes least about his job, Alan says his philosophy is not to dwell on the negative.

All of us at AFI reciprocate Alan's feelings about our people. In one of our company meetings a plant employee made a special public thank-you to Alan for his efforts to walk the plant every day to greet each person and find out if there's anything Alan can do to make their job better. That's the kind of person Alan is but you may not always get to see that during an intense discussion over a reject. That's why we thank him for his efforts and for letting us feature him as our "Sneak Peek" employee this month.



MEET A NEW FACE AT AFI

Lisa Rucker joined the AFI team on January 28th. Lisa graduated from Mankato State University and comes to us with 18 years of experience in the accounting/finance business. Her main responsibilities at AFI will be the day to day accounting responsibilities such as accounts receivable and accounts payable. Her other responsibilities will be Human Resources and IT. Lisa and her husband Josh have been married for six years and have two boys, Jacob 3 1/2 and Christopher 1 1/2. When Lisa is not at work, you can find her reading a good book, working in her garden, or just spending time outdoors. We are delighted to welcome Lisa.



GRIN AND BEAR IT!

We paint some unusual parts from time to time. A customer brought in these animal traps. The first picture below shows you the three sizes. The second picture shows you the scale of how big the BEAR trap on the left really is. I hope some bear doesn't get blood on the new powder coat!

