



Prepared for the Long Haul

In an economy where many companies are having to down size, or close their doors altogether, Associated Finishing Inc. in Mankato, MN will continue to provide dependable and flexible service to its customers.

For a moderately sized paint shop, we enjoy a remarkably stable work force who have acquired the experience and expertise that only time can provide. Of our 55 employees, 14.5% have been with us 1 year or less; 29% from 2-5 years; 51% from 6-20 years. 5% are still with us 21-35+ years after coming on board! That means that each new employee we hire has a large pool of mentors to learn from

Strip, Dip and Hip learned years ago that it takes the whole team pulling together to accomplish worthwhile goals.

throughout the plant. Experienced employees assist them in acquiring their new skills as quickly as possible.

Planning for the future not only requires a stable work force, but the ability of that work force to commit to excellence on a continuing basis. Just lately we were able to purchase several pieces of new equipment which will aid in improving the quality of each finished part we deliver. Even though these tools help take the "guesswork" out of the painting process, we understand that technology is only as good as the skill of the employees who interpret the data obtained. Perhaps you are already familiar with some of this equipment.

If not, read on!

Photo #1 shows a **Mil Thickness Tester** which is used to monitor finished coating thickness. #2) Pictures an **Ultrasonic Non-Contact Powder Coating Thickness Gauge** which monitors efficient material usage and measures coating thickness even before it's cured; #3) A **Gloss Monitor** which shows how shiny or dull the finish is. It can also detect under or over cure situations. #4) A **Dew Point Meter** used to monitor relative humidity, dew point, air temperature & part temperature for an entire batch of parts. #5) An **Adhesion Pull Tester** which measures the force required to pull a specified test diameter of coating away from its substrate. It is used to help us monitor the cured strength of a coating. #6) **Continuous Data Logger** records temperature and relative humidity on an on-going basis and downloads the information to a PC program which can be saved for future reference. Last but not least, is our **Oven Profiler** (#7). This piece of equipment monitors our bake ovens to help insure proper time and temperature of the parts inside. It is used to establish benchmarks for oven efficiency.



Associated Finishing has prepared for the long haul. We will continue to plan for the present and future needs of our customers so that as you look down the road your company is to travel in the years to come, you will see AFI right there beside you - Still stable, flexible, dependable and ready to serve your company to the best of its collective abilities.

*Powder Coating -- Liquid Coating -- Pad Printing
Paint Stripping -- Silkscreening -- R.F.I. Shielding*

Continuing Education in the Finishing Business?



Absolutely! If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right. Let's face it, sometimes even the fellow behind the paint gun needs a little encouragement!

On Wednesday April 30th, both our powder coating crew and a number of other interested employees had the privilege of sitting in on a training class conducted by Tom Lynch. Tom is a long time representative of Nordson and has been involved with powder coating equipment since the beginning stages of this industry.

During a two hour session our guest was able to share a wealth of experience and practical knowledge with our painters covering a broad range of topics. Included with the new information was, of course, a "refresher" on proper powder booth maintenance and powder gun setting tips.

Not only did our employees have the opportunity to learn better ways of doing their powder applications, but they also had the satisfaction of hearing from an expert all the things they are doing right!

About US

Spring is a traditional time to acknowledge the achievements of the past nine months. Many organizations are winding down activities so that members have the summer free to spend with their families. We're pleased to report numerous highlights in the lives of our AFI co-workers.

On April 18th, 2003, the [AFI sponsored Bowling Team](#) qualified to compete in the National Bowling Congress tournament in Knoxville Tennessee. Our maintenance engineer, [Larry Pfeffer](#), was among them. These gentlemen have long since returned to the daily grind, but reports have it that they enjoyed every bit of the honor bestowed upon them.

[Shari Small](#), one of our office crew, qualified to compete for her second year running in the Las Vegas, Nevada [2003 International Darts Competition](#) held from April 25th - May 3rd. She, too, did herself proud.

[Jon Ortloff](#) (painter on the JCI line) is a track enthusiast whose long suit is running. After having taken 1st in the 800 yard dash at an Indoor National Track Meet earlier this year, Jon took his place on the [All American Track Team](#) representing Minnesota State University Mankato. In this competition, he placed 7th. Jon's major is Aviation. He first hopes to serve as a flight instructor, and then may consider a career with a commercial airline. Jon will not be working for us over the summer, but we look forward to his return in August when fall semester begins.

Three of our younger part-time employee/students have also distinguished themselves recently. [Aspiring artist, Teresa Stevens](#), 18 (racking, inspecting, packing) is currently a senior at Mankato West High School. This young lady designed a bookmark which will be used by the Blue Earth County Library Systems. Of the approximately 600 contestants, Teresa's creation took third place!

[Alison Hansen](#), 18 (racking, inspecting, packing) is a senior at Immanuel Lutheran High School in Mankato. This superb athlete broke the [all time Mankato City Basketball Scoring Record](#) with a total of 2,388 points over her high school career. She subsequently received a [full scholarship](#) from North Dakota State University in Fargo to play Division 1 basketball and can't wait to begin campus activities along with living in a dorm! Alison has not selected a specific major yet, preferring the variety offered by a liberal arts curriculum.

[Ryan Kapsner](#), 21(painter) is a student at St. Cloud State University studying Computer Science. He'll be back home and working for us full time over the summer & again part-time when school resumes. Ryan's passion is [Baseball](#). Currently, he plays for the St. Cloud Huskies. In his division this spring, Ryan took [1st place for stolen bases](#), [1st place for walks](#), [1st place for on base](#), and, [5th place for batting averages](#) !



AFI Bowlers L-R: Dan Thoule, Jessie Schauer, Larry Pfeffer (AFI Maint. dept.), Jim Lang, Mike Schauer



Shari Small (center front) representing the American 2003 Dart Team