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Associated Finishing Inc.

NEWSLETTER

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ABOUT US

Industrial Coating Services Serving Minneapolis and Greater Minnesota for 70 years

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High Industry Honors

40 Under 40

Each year, Products Finishing—a popular coating industry publication, recognizes 40 of the industry's young leaders with their "40 under 40 article". This year, AFI's Mick Rykhus made the cut and was recognized for his dedication to driving the coating industry forward!

Mick Rykhus, VP Engineering, was featured in Products Finishing, 40 Under 40 annual class for 2023. Products Finishing hand selects individuals based on a variety of curriculum from leadership to industry innovation & involvement. Mick Rykhus has played a major role in Associated Finishing's growth in the past 10 years with his mechanical engineering knowledge and unique ability to apply that knowledge in a hands-on way to build what the company needs to improve and grow its finishing processes. The combination of Rykhus' ability to not only design and program, but also do hands-on tasks enables AFI to come up with creative solutions for unique coating challenges.

"I love to develop flexible processes at AFI to provide our customers with the highest level of quality and throughput while building lasting relationships with our employees and our customers." – Mick Rykhus

Mick's favorite Quote—"If you think you can, or if you think you can't, you're right."



Top Shops 2023

AFI was recognized as one of the top finishing shops in the country based off of the benchmarking data collected by Products Finishing. The data is compiled off the calendar year 2022 and compared with about 100 other shops in the country. The survey touches on every part of the business including operational efficiency, quality, lead times, safety metrics, preventative maintenance programs, HR practices and more. We look forward to continue to improve in all of those areas in 2023!



Generations of Family, Opportunities, and Relationships

Delivering the Goods— Trucking Improvements

At Associated Finishing Inc., we recognize the importance of the punctual delivery of your products. We are proud to offer a pickup and delivery service that meets the needs of our customers. Our shipping and production teams collaborate seamlessly, optimizing throughput and on-time delivery.

Moving of product is always a challenge and although we don't see ourselves as a trucking company, we have found it necessary to maintain a fleet of trucks to facilitate moving the work. We have averaged about 240,000 miles driven per year between our semi and four straight trucks. Our truck routes routinely center around Mankato, the Twin Cities, and Litchfield. We travel as far north as Brainerd, MN and make dedicated trips to the Iowa border.

The need for continuous improvement of our fleet has led us to two recent purchases. First, we purchased a new 30' black International box truck for lighter loads. These size trucks allow us to be very flexible with our delivery schedule and drivers. We also purchased a 2024 Great Dane Champion trailer, featuring a 13ft tall and 102in wide aluminum construction. It has a slide air ride suspension on tandem axles, which provides your parts a safe and comfortable ride. This replacement of our outdated trailer promises to improve the efficiency of our shipping department and keep us on the road more consistently.

Both new trucks were outfitted with a new design to tie in the old and new of AFI. The old AFI characters "Hip" "Dip" & "Strip" made it on the new trucks. These characters were originally designed by AFI President Ted Schreyer's daughter, Natalie, when she was 8 years old. Natalie (Rykhus) is now in her 30's and in an AFI ownership role with her husband Mick. The characters are a fun way to draw attention to the truck and we've gotten many comments on them over the years. We've also added Extreme Powder Coating to our trucks for the first time tying in their logo and information with AFI. As metal finishing demand continues to grow, we are devoted to keep evolving to better meet the needs of our customers. We'll see you on the road!



BAE Systems Approved - CARC Coatings

Associated Finishing has recently achieved a significant milestone by becoming BAE approved. This prestigious approval signifies AFI's commitment to excellence and adherence to the highest industry standards. AFI actually held a current BAE approval for the Arizona location, but we didn't realize there was a difference between the approval list between this location and the main approval list for BAE. When the lists were consolidated in 2022, AFI made the cut as a preferred vendor.

BAE Systems produces defense electronics for flight and engine control, electronics warfare, and surveillance among other systems. They have been a preferred military contractor for many years. AFI provides Chemical Agent Resistant Coatings (CARC) to several different defense contractors through our partnerships with our customers. These coatings have many properties that make them specialized for the military including extremely low-gloss camouflage to minimize visual detection and they use highly reflective pigments to reduce the amount of solar heat given off by a vehicle. The corrosion resistance of the coating to chemical warfare is perhaps the most impressive property as this coating protects the system and makes decontamination possible. These coatings are available in both powder and liquid.

To become BAE approved, Associated Finishing Inc had to undergo an audit set up especially for the cleaning and painting applications. The audit is based off the military specifications MIL-DTL-53072 & TT-C-490. The audit ran through best practices centering around application processes, equipment calibration, testing requirements & verification, data collection & more. There is a large amount of documentation to collect and retain when working on parts to this specification. We've built the programs to adhere to it over the last 20 years and by adding some of today's technology, we have made it easier to manage.

We are very proud of this approval and excited for it to help propel AFI into future defense work!



Fairmont Raceway 2023

Extreme Powder Coating accepted the opportunity to be the 2023 track sponsor for the Tuners Class at Fairmont Raceway for the 2023 season. The track has a 16-race season that started in May and will run through September. There have been many great nights of racing so far and as part of the sponsorship we have been able to give away tickets to our employees.

Extreme will also be sponsoring the Bumblebee Nationals race again at Kosuth Speedway in Algona, Iowa on July 6th. The donated purse this year is \$1000 cash & \$500 in powder coating. Last year the Bumblebee Nationals drew 25 cars from four states and they are expecting a very competitive field once again. AFI/Extreme will have our very own Mick Rykhus entering the race again this year. Last year, Mick battled for 1st early on, but then had car trouble which ended his night.



Silkscreen & Pad Printing —Making Your Mark

Silkscreen and pad printing are a value-added services that AFI provides to give your products the extra "pop" it needs. With a durable ink logo over top of a solid base coat of paint, you'll have a product that has the performance to match a great looking part. But how much do you know about printing on metal surfaces? Let's walk through the process.

Silk screening, also known as screen printing, is a versatile printing technique that has been used for centuries to transfer images onto various surfaces. Originally developed in ancient China, this method has evolved over time and found its way into modern applications, including the manufacturing industry.

While silk screening is commonly associated with textiles and paper, it is also a remarkable process for applying designs to metal surfaces. With its ability to transfer intricate designs, this technique has become a staple in the industry. Silk screening consists of a mesh screen with a design imprinted into a film using a light exposure unit. These screens are made

in-house and we work with a local business to create the artwork needed. This fine mesh allows a crisp image to be transferred onto the metal part using a squeegee to press the ink through the screen. The part is then moved into an oven for the cure cycle. The mixing of the inks, materials used and bake cycle are very similar to many of our liquid painting process making this process an easy fit into our production flow.

Part geometry can make even a simple screening job complicated. The screen needs to lay flat on the surface that it is being applied to. Therefore if the part does not naturally lay flat on a table, then it needs to be fixtured to lay parallel with the screen. This can be a simple process or complicated one depending on the types of items in the way. Hardware, bent corners, and overhanging sides can all get in the way of the screen. It is important to have a sturdy, well-built fixture to get repeatability in the process.

AFI's pad printing system is a versatile way to complete

smaller parts and in spaces that a silkscreen couldn't reach. This is a process of automatically stamping a design onto a part and it can reach inside corners of parts with complicated geometry. Pad printing is quick and repeatable as the machine fills the design plate with ink, squeegees off the excess, applies it to the rubber pad and stamps it on to a fixtured part.

For industrial products, the durability of the ink over paint has proven itself to stand up very harsh chemicals and solvents. Our silkscreen applications routinely stand up to an MEK wipe and industrial cleaning chemicals. By following the necessary steps of surface preparation, stencil creation, ink application, and curing, one can achieve high-quality and long-lasting prints on metal.

AFI has been offering silkscreen and pad printing for over 35 years. Common projects that come to us are part number marking, especially on the Defense projects, company logos, and electrical port labeling.

