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INCORPORATED



320 Mallard Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001



Associated Finishing Inc.

# NEWSLETTER

## MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM AFI!

At this time of year, the celebration of Christ's birth is a reminder of our abundant blessings so we can't help but show appreciation to all the people in our lives.

As we reflect on 2023, we want to thank you all for the role you played in AFI's success. This letter goes out to customers, vendors, employees, and friends and you've all made a positive impact on AFI in some way. We sincerely appreciate your connection.

Like previous years we've seen plenty of challenges and opportunities and we've strived to make continuous improvements. The focus has been on earning your trust through our core values of Flexibility, Attention to detail, Reliability, and Motivation in our service. We stress our "FARM" core values and strive to live them in our work. Hopefully we've somehow made a positive impact on each of you.

We wish you the best of God's blessings and a very Happy New Year as we enter 2024. Thank you for all that you do for AFI!

*Matt, Mick, Ted, Jammey, Ryan, and all of the AFI/Extreme Crews*



### CONTACT US

320 Mallard Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001  
TF: (866)345-5861  
P: (507)345-5861  
F: (507)345-5828

### ABOUT US

Industrial Coating Services Serving Minneapolis and Greater Minnesota for over 70 years

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**Generations of Family, Opportunities, and Relationships**

## LASER DANGER \* Laser Cut Products & Quality

Whether you are a producer of agricultural equipment, sheet metal products, or a custom fabricator, we are sure you have dealt with your fair share of laser cut products. Laser cutting revolutionized the manufacturing industry by offering precise, clean and efficient cutting solutions for various materials, including metals. If you are familiar with laser cutting, this also means that you likely have products that have went into service and found out that the powder coat or paint on the edge has started to peel. At first, our instinct is to perceive this as a paint or powder coat application issue, but lets dig a little deeper, beneath the surface, and get down to the root cause of the failure.



When it comes down to finishing your flawlessly fabricated product, careful collaboration should take place between the manufacturer and metal finisher. The issue with paint adhesion on the laser cut edge is due to the formation of heat scale on the steel. This is especially true for thicker materials. The powder coating adheres very well to the scale that is produced during cutting, but the scale does not adhere to the metal edge. When that edge takes a direct hit, the scale will often pop off taking the layer of powder coating with it.

Luckily, there are multiple ways to eliminate the scale left behind from laser cutting with oxygen. One method is mechanical abrasion, like blasting, or even tumbling smaller parts. This wears the scale off and leaves a smooth yet adhesive surface for a coating to bond. Another option is to remove the scale with acidic chemicals. These chemicals require a lot of attention and maintenance to keep the systems running properly. Some manufacturers are opting for cutting with nitrogen versus oxygen. Nitrogen leaves no scale, but the gas is more expensive and it takes more time to cut. Keep in mind that paint failures and re-work can also be costly, so these drawbacks might be justified. AFI does have the in-house ability to remove scale using the mentioned processes. If you have any questions give us a call!

## Welcome Mike! A New Era of Production for Extreme Powder Coating



In Blooming Prairie, our Extreme Powder Coating location has embraced and welcomed a new Production Manager, Mike Beebe! He has led the Extreme production team for almost one year now.

One of the most pivotal roles in any manufacturing setting is that of the Production Manager. It's a position that demands a strategic vision, acute problem-solving skills, and an unwavering dedication to quality. With Mike at the helm, we are poised to not only meet but exceed these expectations.

With 16 years as a Sous Chef in Las Vegas, Mike brings a process-oriented culinary expertise to his production role, skillfully guiding his team toward top-notch goal attainment. His quick adaptability in the coatings industry and results-oriented approach shine through his work in fast-paced settings. Additionally, Mike prioritizes collaborative and empowering leadership, recognizing the strength of unity within a team. He fosters an environment where every member feels valued, motivated, and inspired to contribute

their best, fostering a culture where ideas thrive. He attributes a significant part of his success in this role to his crew, whom he considers more than colleagues—they're his friends.

Mike prioritizes open communication channels with our customers. Upon starting, his primary aim was to familiarize himself with their individual needs. He believes that the more information he gathers, the more effectively he can strategize and tailor solutions to accommodate everyone's requests.

With Mike's leadership, we are confident in our ability to navigate the challenges ahead while seizing opportunities for growth and advancement. Mike credits his wife Jackie for her unwavering support. Mike balances his work and personal life by believing that if you make a happy home your priority, the rest will follow wherever you go.

## We Wish You a Bright 2024

For years, our tradition has been gifting our customers and vendors our iconic Duck Stamp Calendars, symbolizing the connection between our 320 Mallard Lane home office and your Christmas gift. While we've cherished this tradition, it's time for a change. This year, anticipate a new gift—a telescoping LED flashlight—with an AFI logo etched on the side. This versatile flashlight features a convenient clip for easy attachment anywhere you need it. Remember to remove the battery blocker by unscrewing the cap and taking out the thin plastic shield. Don't worry, we'll still have Duck Stamp Calendars available. If you'd like one, please don't hesitate to reach out.



## Building Success—Generations of Experience

Success isn't instant; it's built through passion, focus, persistence, and preparation. It demands confidence, perseverance, and an understanding that failure fosters personal growth. At Associated Finishing, success starts with our employees. Long-term team members form the backbone of any thriving organization offering invaluable dedication, loyalty, and experience. Today, we'll spotlight two of our longest-serving employees: Scott Niss, an Estimator with 34 years of service and Mike Reinerts, a Mallard Production Lead with 30 years. Their knowledge, dedication, and experience have been pivotal in shaping our company's culture and fueling its growth.



Scott Niss's lasting journey at Associated Finishing began during his college years at Mankato State University. Introduced by family members already working at AFI, he started as a packer and moved into painting and powder coating. After graduating with a Manufacturing Engineering degree in 1992, Scott was chosen for the Quality Manager position. He excelled in that for a couple years, when the Estimator position caught his attention.

Scott's tech expertise drives his success, crafting daily quotes for diverse clients efficiently. Evolving software aids him in meeting new demands, ensuring meticulous organization. Reflecting on 34 years, he credits his motivation to exceptional colleagues who are like close friends, fueling his enduring dedication.

Scott and his family most enjoy lake day activities around the Mankato area. They have a zest for traveling and are currently planning another cruise in February.



Mike Reinerts joined AFI three decades ago and has since been an integral part of our production team. With extensive experience as a skilled painter, he holds a revered leadership position. He is admired for his wealth of invaluable knowledge that greatly benefits both our production and quality teams.

Mike hails from rural New Ulm and completed his education at New Ulm High School. His journey at AFI commenced through existing connections within the production team. He soon jumped into a role on the manual liquid coating line and hasn't looked back.

Mike is committed to ensuring top-notch quality in his work. He finds great satisfaction in tackling detailed projects, particularly those involving intricate masking. Known as a technical expert, he constantly seeks faster and more efficient methods to deliver products promptly to customers. His expertise lies in military projects and prototypes. Additionally, he has recently acquired fluency in our high-temperature ceramic coatings. Mike works closely with departmental leads to facilitate a seamless product flow and maintain adequate stock of materials.

During his leisure time, Mike actively participates in three different bands. His musical journey is vibrant, and his greatest joy lies in playing the drums.

Scott Niss and Mike Reinerts exemplify the enduring commitment and expertise that define our company. Their collective decades of service have been pivotal in shaping our culture and driving our growth at Associated Finishing. We are lucky to have them on the team!

### Recognizing other dedicated AFI employees over 20 years of service:

Ted Schreyer: 45 years  
Tony Senese: 37 years  
Bill Muldoon: 30 years  
Curt Sieg: 29 years  
Vickie Schreyer: 27 years  
Ryan Kapsner: 24 years  
Jammy Harroun: 23 years  
Mandi Harroun: 23 years