



# ASSOCIATED EXPRESS



320 Mallard Lane, Mankato, MN 56001 Phone: (507) 345-5861 Fax: (507) 345-5828 December 2007

## "Seasons of Change"



As all of our customers know, change is constant. Associated Finishing is no different. Alan Baer has been AFI's Quality Assurance Manager for over 15 years. Al has changed positions at AFI and has become our Process Engineer. He graduated from Mankato State University with a degree in Business Administration. Al also has 20+ years of Industrial/Manufacturing Engineering experience. Al's responsibilities will include assessing day-to-day processes and improving them by focusing on Lean management practices. He will also continue to administer the certification inspection program AFI already has in place. Al lives in Madison Lake with his lovely wife Becky. They have two grown daughters and 4 grandsons. We congratulate Al on his new position and we thank him for his years of service in Quality Assurance.

For all Quality or stripping questions; or if you need a stripping quote you may contact Christine Doering. Christine has been with AFI since March of 2007 and is currently the Sales and Marketing Manager. She will be taking on these responsibilities along with her current role. You may call Christine toll-free at 866-345-5861, ext. 212 or 507-345-5861 ext. 212. You may also reach her via e-mail at [cdoering@associatedfinishing.com](mailto:cdoering@associatedfinishing.com).

NOW SHOWING!!!!



Grab a bag of popcorn and a chair and watch the newest addition to the AFI website.

**\*FEATURING\***

The exclusive Associated Finishing, Inc. video. Take a look and see what we are all about! Take a virtual tour of our facility and meet the best part of AFI; the people!!!!

## Congratulations to AFI employees.



At AFI's ESOP meeting October 12, six employees were recognized for their years of dedication.

(Left picture, back row left to right): Reggie Williams—15 years (trucking), Shari Small—10 years (Order entry), Vicki Schreyer—10 years (Off-line prep), (Front row left to right): Phyllis Olfert—5 years (Off-line prep), Kathy Guetschow—20 years (Powder painter).

(Right picture) Bill Neegaard—10 years (Liquid painter).

Each employee received gift certificates to local Mankato businesses of their choice. Together they total 70 years of service to AFI. Thank you, and congratulations again.



Congrats to more AFI employees!

Dan Murray and Amber Nelson on the birth of their baby boy Jadyn Murray  
October-3-2007 - 7 lbs 9 1/2 oz. - 21 inches long



Check out our website at [www.associatedfinishing.com](http://www.associatedfinishing.com) We welcome quotes  
e-mail to: [quotes@associatedfinishing.com](mailto:quotes@associatedfinishing.com)  
or fax to Associated Finishing, Inc. (507) 345-5828.



## AFI Training on 5S and Kaizen's



On September 26th, 52 employees from the AFI team came together for training. For some it was a review, for others it was a first time training. Al Baer, Quality Assurance, and Ryan Kapsner, Operations Assistant, (Picture at left) led the training. 5S categories are: (Are we at the Academy Awards?) Sort/Set/Shine/Standardize/Sustain—the winner is SUSTAIN! Al and Ryan both stressed we need to keep up the work we began two years ago. AFI's team will continue our monthly audits in each area of the building. Al also briefly explained Kaizen's and what they are and how they will improve our work, which ultimately improves our service to our customers. Every month we are encouraging participation by giving a prize for one of our employees idea. (Read next article)



Take a peek at our September, October and November winners below. September's prize was a MP3 Player won by Jake Sukalski (left picture). October winner was Larry Olfert winning an AFI long sleeve shirt (center picture).

### Kaizen winners for 3rd Quarter at AFI

Take a peek at our September, October and November winners below. September's prize was an MP3 player won by Jake Sukalski (pictured top right).

October's winner was Larry Olfert winning an AFI long sleeve shirt (pictured left).

Connie Kump, our November winner, received a \$25.00 gift certificate to Best Buy (pictured right bottom). All three of these AFI employees are painters.



*We are so proud! Chuck Klammer was selected as the 2006 –2007 "Coater of the Year". This award is presented by the National Board and Office of the Chemical Coaters Association International. The award is given to one chemical coater that gives time, service, and support to their local chapter. Presenting the award to Chuck is President Pat Cullen of the Twin Cities Custom Coaters Association International.*

*Congratulations Chuck, you are one in a million!!!!*

### Ryan Kapsner & Kathi Antilley

Were united in marriage on October 20th, 2007. Ryan Kapsner is AFI's Operations Assistant. The theme for their wedding was baseball since they are both very avid baseball fans. Every guest received a wedding favor of a baseball, printed with "For the love of the game", which by the way, was printed at AFI in our pad printing area. (Pictured at right).



From everyone at Associated Finishing, we wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Take time to reflect on what Christmas is all about. The gift of

Jesus to the world prompts us to give gifts to those we love and care about. Gifts are an expression of our love and thankfulness. Our Christmas gift this year is YOU, our many loyal customers and friends. We sincerely thank you for your business and look forward to serving you in 2008.





## Greetings from the President

It is November 17, about 2:45 p.m. and I am standing by the door of my machine shed in coveralls immersed in my dual role as Host/Parking Attendant for WEE KIDS THEATER! This year our 7 grandchildren, and many of their friends, have been transforming MY space into a Forest Glen for their Holiday Musical "A Tale of Three Trees". The Kids have been working on it since last June, and my tools and personal "toys" have been buried beneath cardboard and clutter ever since! I can't help but be amazed by the fruits of our combined labor. As the house lights (Read that, bare bulbs on the ceiling) disappear, and the stage lights begin to glow, the children belt out their refrain to the Elder Woodcutter's solo...."

*"If we had God's eyes and could see to forever, we'd never have to struggle to believe. We'd understand why, and in all of our questions, we'd know what the answers would be. But, we have faith enough to know, God is ALWAYS in control, when we can't see the forest for the trees!"*



I hear complete conviction in those young voices to some fairly profound truths. Believe me, there are plenty of days when I wonder if I'm able to see the forest for the trees!! I struggle with many questions, such as: is AFI following the soundest course? How will we resolve this month's challenges? Do we need to revise our corporate plans for the future in any way? And, the Big One-How will I, our current CEO, best facilitate AFI during those necessary transitions as I begin to move toward my own retirement?

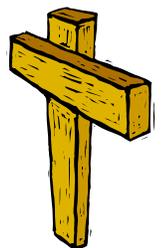
We all live with personal, professional, national and global uncertainties. This fact will never change. No human being will ever be privy to the BIG PICTURE, no matter how dedicated we are to gathering all the information available to us as we make our day-to-day decisions.

But, there is Some One out there who has a perfect handle on the events shaping our lives. Once in awhile it just takes those small voices singing in a dimly lit shed to help me put everything back into perspective. It says "Chill Out, Charlie! I AM in control. You just pay attention to the trees and let ME take charge of the Forest!"

For those of you who are not familiar with A Tale of Three Trees—It is the story of three young saplings—each with big dreams and aspirations for their own futures. How God, in the fullness of time, granted each tree it's heart's desire in ways the little trees could never have anticipated. The Linden, who sought to hold great riches, became the feedbox in which the Christ Child was placed after his birth in Bethlehem. The Oak, who dreamed of becoming a mighty ship, was fashioned into a simple fishing boat that transported Jesus and his disciples on the Sea of Galilee. The Pine, who simply wanted to remain in the forest to grow tall and direct everyone's gaze toward heaven, became a rough cross upon which Christ was eventually crucified. God has even greater plans for OUR lives.

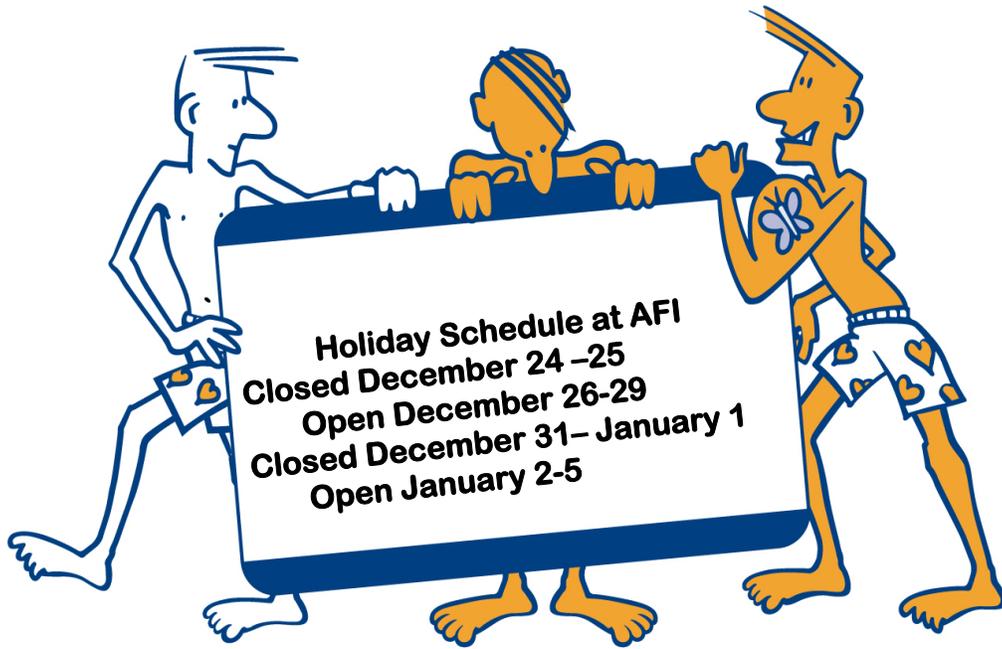


"Just listen and you will hear!"



As we, at Associated Finishing begin to make our own preparations to celebrate Christmas this year, we would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your loved ones the blessings of this very Special Season—both now and in the years to come.

*Merry Christmas, Chuck Klammer, CEO*



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