

# Associated Express



*Customer Newsletter for Associated Finishing, Inc., formerly Associated Engineering of Mankato, Inc.*

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Winter 2000

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS



Times have changed greatly since this lad entered the work force back at the turn of the last century. One can only imagine what he might have been pondering as he walked beside his horses and the load they were undoubtedly hauling to market.

Certainly, it was a far cry from our generation's preoccupation with quality control, fair labor practice, one day turn around time, environmental safety, and the like.

The many pressures of commerce today often make us look wistfully upon the life-style of yesteryear. Yet, few of us would seriously consider trading the technology we enjoy today for life in a time when it was so limited.

We, here at Associated Finishing, hope you will take a moment to sit back and take stock of your own personal blessings this Holiday Season. We all continue to move headlong into this first century of a brand new millennium. It is OUR TIME . Our opportunity to use our integrity, ingenuity and people skills, to transform our individual 'spheres of influence' into positive places for all to work and achieve success.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your success. Know that we will continue to help you along that path well into the future.

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

# Associated Finishing Partners with Students

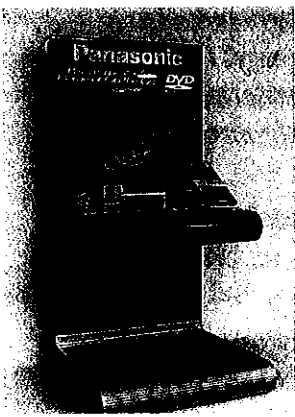
Students from Mike Durbahn's Design Technology class at Mankato West High School recently got a taste of the 'real world' when they stepped in as temporary labor for AFI.

After repeatedly turning down projects for new customers due to the shortage of available workers, our Estimator, Scott Niss, came up with the idea of using local students. The next time he received an inquiry for a job requiring lots of manpower for a short time, Scott approached West High School and the perfect match was made!

In class, 25 students reviewed the design plans, discussed assembly and tools required for the job. Then, with supervision from their instructor, those students worked on our site for two days assembling 'Marketing Display Units' for Panasonic. "Without their help, we never could have taken on this work", Niss reaffirms. During the process, enterprising students even came up with suggestions on ways to improve the product design.

"What we are doing is expanding the walls of Mankato West", stated Winston Kindem, the placement specialist at the high school. "Students see the work world and what school-to-career is all about."

"It was a great opportunity for students to follow something from start to finish, and the project provides benefits to both sides," added Alan Fitterer, Assistant Principal. In addition, the students will have the fun of seeing the displays they assembled in local stores this Holiday Season.



Not only did these young people gain a unique perspective on industry (and on the Free Enterprise System of which they will soon be a part), but AFI is donating \$5 per assembly to the West High School Technology Department. What a perfect Christmas Gift for all involved!

## Employee Recognition

Another productive Quarter has come and gone for us at AFI, and with it another opportunity to recognize employees for various milestones achieved within our organization.

Diane Prom (on right), currently part of our Packing Division, has been with AFI for 20 years. Matias Ivarra (left) - masker and packer on the JCI Line - joined us 5 years ago, as did Brian Christnagel (middle) who heads up Shipping and Receiving. All three were presented catalogs from which they selected the gift of their choice.

Associated Finishing became an ESOP company (Employee Stock Owner Program) in 1993. Each year more employees are vested and opt to become stockowners. These individuals share AFI's success and take noticeable pride in this company we rightly call "our own".

New ESOP members for the year 2000 include: Jeanette Hale (solo); Then (left/ right....back/ front), Bonnie Smith; Collin Burke; Brett Kietser; Connie Kump; Ken Wikre; & Linda Kump. A warm welcome to each of you!

