

M&M Precision Announces A2LA Accreditation

M&M Precision Systems Corp. began operations late last year as the world's first and only A2LA-accredited commercial gear inspection lab.

The goals of the A2LA are achieving customer satisfaction through meeting laboratory and user needs for competent testing and calibration, improving the quality of laboratories and their data, and increasing the acceptance of accredited laboratory data to facilitate trade.

"Accreditation can be defined as a procedure by which an authoritative body [accreditation body] gives formal recognition that a conformity assessment body fulfills specified requirements and is competent to carry out specific tasks. This is always third party," says Roger Brauning, senior lab services officer of the Association for Laboratory Accreditation.

In other words, A2LA accreditation gives customers added reassurance that M&M is competent in the field of gear measuring.

According to Todd Griffith, product manager at M&M, the company has been registered to ISO 17025 for years, which also demanded consistent measurements over a long period of time.

The difference, says Brauning, lies in the fact that ISO 17025 is one of the quality standards considered as a basis for the A2LA accreditation. It is the most appropriate standard for quality control testing labs, he says, but there are many more quality standards which accreditation bodies utilize.

The idea to go one step further in the accreditation status was initiated by Ed Lawson, M&M's director of metrology. He sat on several AGMA committees with employees from the U.S. government's metrology center in Oak Ridge, TN, who convinced him of the need in the commercial market for A2LA accreditation.

Oak Ridge also supplies gear metrology services, but the focus of that facility is on government standards and tends to be more expensive for the customer. Yet, for a long time before M&M's recent accreditation, Oak Ridge was customers' only option.

Griffith explains: "Their focus is slower, extremely expensive and just not designed for commercial application. Yet there was no need being met for the commercial marketplace."

M&M's accreditation is a result of a process that spanned two years, required tens of thousands of dollars (half for the initial certification and half for the yearly renewal) and the use of an outside consulting service.

According to Griffith, the end result has justified the efforts. For starters, the Big Three (Ford, DaimlerChrysler and General Motors) stipulate that their suppliers must be accredited to A2LA. Tier One suppliers typically follow suit in those cases, says Griffith. A multitude of components are used in building a car and all need to meet specifications for quality. Being accredited to A2LA saves the automobile manufacturers the chore of testing each of the components themselves, says Brauning.

Post-accreditation, one of the biggest challenges has been



communicating the discrepancy between their data figures and those of a non-accredited company to their customers. In many cases, the two final numbers are very similar.

"One stipulation is that you can't advise a customer whether a measurement is good or bad. Every measurement has some amount of error, and our goal [in getting accredited] is to minimize the gray areas," says Griffith. "A2LA says that it's not our job to justify the result [of our measurement] or apply it to someone else's business."

With time, this issue should sort itself out as the gear industry collectively familiarizes itself with the specifics of A2LA. Griffith expects the industry to eventually embrace A2LA in the same manner as it did ISO.

"This kind of thing usually gets momentum from the top," he says. "People initially took the ISO stipulations for quality pretty lightly and now it's the expectation. We estimate that the same will happen with A2LA in less than five years."



Rexnord to Buy Falk for \$295 Million

Rexnord Corp. announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to purchase The Falk Corp. from Hamilton Sundstrand, a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp., for \$295 million. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of this year.

Rexnord, headquartered in Milwaukee, WI, is a worldwide manufacturer of power transmission components with revenues of approximately \$800 million. Falk, also headquartered in Milwaukee, is a manufacturer of gears and couplings, with annual revenues of approximately \$200 million.

"By combining two successful companies that have complementary products and technologies, we create a bigger, stronger business with combined annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion," says Robert Hitt, Rexnord's CEO, in the company's press release. "This acquisition is consistent with Rexnord's growth strategy, enhancing our capabilities and allowing us to better serve our customers."

"Falk Corp. has a strong market presence with substantial brand equity and a significant installed base," says Dave Doerr, Falk's president. "Falk looks forward to joining with Rexnord to offer our customers the best solutions to their power transmission needs."

Star SU Consolidates Sales With Bourn & Koch, Winco

A mutual agreement has been reached for sales and marketing between Star SU and Bourn & Koch for their machine tool product lines.

This enterprise will be owned and managed by an executive committee of members of both organizations.

Star SU's comprehensive line of gear machine tool products will now be enhanced by a complementary line of gear hobbbers, grinding machines and Fellows shaping machines as a result of this merger.

A separate agreement between Winco and Star SU has been reached for consolidation of sales activities of each company's gear tool product line. The intention of this agreement is to consolidate all sales activities under Star SU LLC. The enterprise, effective July 1, will be owned and managed by members of both companies.

The merger creates a significant addition to the existing Star SU gear tool product line of PCD and CBN inserts and cartridges, reamers, special cutters and integral shank tooling for high volume transfer machining systems throughout North America.

The combined enterprise allows chip-making manufacturers to use a single supplier of precision round tools and gear tools and of support service for them.

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**American Wera Exec
Dies in Plane Crash**



Jim and Deanna Eaton

Jim Eaton, vice president of sales for American Wera Inc. in Ann Arbor, MI, and his wife Deanna, died March 30 in a plane crash.

The two were headed to Sarasota, FL, to move Deanna's 85-year-old mother back to Midland, MI, for the summer when the Rockwell Commander 114B that Eaton was piloting crashed into the Gulf of Mexico. They were just a few miles from the airport.

Eaton was a graduate of Ball State University. He is survived by his mother, Catherine Burnett of Logansport, IN, and his daughter, Genessa Eaton of Saline, MI.

Walter Friedrich, president of American Wera, worked with Eaton at Liebherr for years before forming American Wera. "For us, he was very involved with hobbing and the one who pushed the first gear honing machine in the U.S."

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**Siemens Acquires
Flender Holding GmbH**

Siemens AG has acquired Flender Holding GmbH of Bocholt, Germany, for €1.2 billion in order to expand its business in industrial drive technology.

According to a company press release, Flender's activities will be integrated into the Siemens Automation and Drives Group as its 11th division.

Flender, a supplier of mechanical and electrical drive equipment, has sales of €1.012 billion and employs 6,700 employees at 80 locations.

The Siemens Automation and Drives Group, located in Nuremberg, Germany, is a leading manufacturer of automation and drives.

This transaction is subject to the approval of anti-trust authorities.

**Northstar Aerospace Awarded Rolls-Royce
and U.S. Army Contracts**

Northstar Aerospace has received three aerospace contracts totaling \$17 million from Rolls-Royce plc and the U.S. Army.

According to the company's press release, Northstar has been contracted for \$9 million of work in developing and manufacturing internal gearbox components used in the Trent 1000 engine. The gearbox components will power the Boeing 787 Dreamliner wide-bodied jet that will begin service later this decade.

Two contracts were awarded by the U.S. Army's Aviation and Missile Command, which develops, acquires, fields and sustains Army aviation and missile weapons systems. The first contract has an estimated value of \$4 million and entails an overhaul of the forward transmissions used in the twin-turbine,

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tandem rotor CH-47 Chinook transport helicopter. Also valued at \$4 million, the second contract is for providing spare parts for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter and the CH-47 Chinook.

Ritchie Moves to Star SU



Mark Ritchie

Mark Ritchie was hired as a gear tool project engineer at Star SU LLC. He has held a similar position at Gleason for the past six years. Prior to that, he worked at Atwood Mobile Products for four years.

According to the company's press release, he specializes in the design, manufacturing and application of gear hobs, shaper hobs, shaper cutters, and non-generating hobs. He has also been responsible for testing HSS materials and coating combinations for customer satisfaction. Ritchie has experience in lean manufacturing and Kaizen implementation, has been involved in ISO 9001/ISO 14001 as a lead quality auditor and is familiar with developing, linking and applying lead quality systems.

Among his new responsibilities will be providing gear tool technical service and technical support.

Gleason, Harbin Form Joint Venture

Gleason Corp. announced that it is in the process of forming a joint venture with Harbin No. 1 Tool Corp. for the production of precision gear cutting tools.

Both companies plan to produce high precision gear cutting tools and provide service to end-user markets. The joint venture will be named Gleason Yi Gong (Harbin) Cutting Tools Co. Ltd.

In the mid-1980s, Gleason licensed Harbin for certain tool technologies. Gleason will now contribute and license its latest technology, including proprietary equipment and software, as well as provide support in the form of technical know-how and training.

A letter of intent has been signed detailing the terms of the joint venture, which is slated to begin in the third quarter of this year. Gleason and Harbin No. 1 will own 70% and 30% of the joint venture, respectively.

Dana and Dongfeng Motor Sign Agreement

Dana Corp. and Dongfeng Motor Co. Ltd. signed an agreement to form a joint venture company to develop and produce commercial vehicle axles in China.

According to Dana's press release, the 50/50 joint venture will be called Dongfeng Dana Axle Co. Ltd. At a future date, the partnership may begin producing driveshafts and other products for commercial vehicles.

Arrangements will be finalized in the third quarter of this year, following government approvals.

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Dana will invest approximately \$60 million in an existing Dongfeng subsidiary, which is China's largest commercial vehicle axle manufacturer. Headquartered in Xiangfan, China, the joint venture company will employ approximately 8,000 people in production facilities in Shiyan and Xiangfan as well as a research center to be established in Wuhan.

Dongfeng Dana Axle will continue to primarily supply Dongfeng Motor, which is one of the world's largest truck producers, while expanding other product offerings. Projected annualized sales for the joint venture company are expected to be approximately \$400 million.



Bruce Cowley

Cowley Named Sales Manager of Process Equipment

Bruce Cowley was hired as a sales manager for Process Equipment Co.'s metrology systems division.

According to the company's press release, Cowley has more than 20 years' experience in gear metrology and gear processing companies such as Sheffield

Measurement, M&M Precision, David Brown Engineering—Sykes division, Mahr Federal and Gleason.

In his new position, Cowley will lead the sales and distribution activities for the Next Dimension Series CNC elemental systems, special gear and gear tool-related inspection systems and contract inspection.

Lambert-Wahli Make Merger Official

Lambert Ltd. and Wahli Ltd. merged their operations on April 1.

According to a press release, the two companies have been operating under the same management, at the same headquarters for several years. All addresses and telephone numbers will remain unchanged.

GM Invests to Build New Transmissions in Strasbourg Plant

GM announced that it will invest approximately €160 million in its Strasbourg plant to produce its new family of six-speed, rear-wheel-drive automatic transmissions. The investment includes facility renovation, new machinery and equipment and tooling to support new processes.

"We are committed to the six-speed transmission playing a greater role in the GM powertrain product portfolio," says Tom Stephens in the company's press release.

The GM Powertrain transmission plant in Strasbourg, France, already produces the 5L40-E and the 5L50-E five-speed, rear-wheel-drive automotive transmission for luxury sedans, SUVs and performance cars.



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