

Frozen in Time: Team Empire Takes the Plunge

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

Empire Polar Plunge

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Marilyn Semlar retires
after 32 yrs.

REMEMBER WHEN

Robert Snodgrass - 1980 Newsletter

SAFETY AWARENESS NEWS

Updating Building for Safety
Safety Record Featured
on WXOW TV 19

National Safety Observances

COMMUNITY CORNER

Chili Cook-Off for Place of Grace

Book Sales to Benefit
American Red Cross

CALENDAR ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

EMPLOYEE
ANNIVERSARIES

NEW EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEE
ANNOUNCEMENTS
2012 Empire Calendar Theme

On March 5th 2011, Empire participated in its 1st annual Polar Plunge at Pettibone Beach. The plunge was a success on multiple levels. Empire, its employees, and the Wisconsin Special



Hundreds wait their turn to plunge on Pettibone Beach

Olympics all benefited from "Team Empire's" participation in the Polar Plunge. We, as a team, had 20 participants' sign up, consisting of 17 plungers, and three "Chickens"(too chicken to plunge). Not only did we have a great time; we were able to raise \$2,427, which was donated to the Special Olympics of Wisconsin.

Empire obtained recognition for our participation in the Polar Plunge from the Onalaska-Holmen News Courier. In their February 25th edition, they wrote a news story about Empire's enthusiasm for being involved in the La Crosse community; highlighting our reasons for taking the plunge, which include giving back to the community and boosting employee moral. I personally feel we



Plungers brave water temperatures of less than 30° F

were able to accomplish, and surpass both goals.

All employees involved with this event were very excited prior to the plunge. Our theme was to, "Dress like the year you were born". We encouraged our friends and families to donate, and share jokes about our insanity. Everybody, except the chickens, dressed in clothes that were popular during the era they were born. The chickens, on the other hand, dressed like... "well chickens. Nancy Gilbertson was not ruffled by the attention of sporting a full chicken costume, leaving yellow feathers in her wake. Every



Empire Chickens cheer and cluck from the sidelines

participant, including chickens, were required to raise a minimum of \$75 in order to participate. Most plungers were able to raise more than the minimum, with Dale Westaby and Amy Bettis being our top fund raisers accumulating over \$300 in donations.

The big winners here are Wisconsin Special Olympic Athletes. The La Crosse community alone raised \$165,000, bringing the total dollar amount raised statewide to nearly \$1.9 million. The money goes to fund training and competition for over 10,000 athletes with special needs, who compete in 18 different sports year-round.

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." This is the Special Olympics Athlete Oath. Only our generous donations can allow these special athletes to continue to be brave.

~ Chad Ellickson



NATIONAL SAFETY OBSERVANCES

April 1-30

Alcohol Awareness Month

Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov



May 1-7

North American Occupational Safety and Health week

Sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers.
www.asse.org/newsroom/naosh09/events.php



June 18

National Employee Health and Fitness Day

Sponsored by National Association for Health and Fitness
physicalfitness.org/nehf.html



June 1-30

Men's Health Month

Sponsored by the Men's Health Network
www.menshealthmonth.org

Building Improvements Ensuring a Safer Workplace

At Empire there are three (3) exits that are below ground level.

- Clean Room #1, *Building K*
- Ink Department, *Building Q*
- Exit across from Electrical Room, *Building N*

During the winter these exits become drifted in with snow and ice. Removing snow and ice from these areas can be very labor intensive. The rest of the year, when we have heavy rains, water floods under the doors in these areas and floods into the plant. Both of these situations create undesirable hazards.

Empire's Safety Committee has recognized these hazardous areas. This Spring roofs will be constructed over all three exits, and the lack of a safety railing at ground level Clean Room #1 will also be addressed.

Keith Cook



Building K, Outside Clean Room 1



Building K, Outside Clean Room 1 Area for safety railing



Building N, Outside exit across from Electrical Room



Building Q, Outside Ink Department

Safety Coordinator:

Randy Hoff Plant Engineer

Committee Members:

Lee Vieth Plant Manager
John Johnson Operations Coord.
Roger Henderson Insurance Agent

Amy Bettis Art Department
Keith Cook R&D
Steve Nelson Die Making
Brian Searle Maintenance
Debbie Wolfe Level 3



WXOW TV19 Covers Empire's Outstanding Safety Record

ONALASKA, Wisconsin (WXOW)-- For a little more than three years now, no employee at Empire has used lost time or workers' comp. In September 2000 the company created a safety committee to combat their high risk insurance costs. The committee is made up of current employees, who hold each other accountable for wearing

proper eye, ear and hand protection. Employees are rewarded for every 100 injury free days. They receive a catered meal and are entered in a \$2,000 dollar drawing. "It has been a great success. Our customers have come in and said how did you do this? It is not me, it is thanks to our employees," said Empire VP Jim Schwinefus.

"They are giving back for us being safe. So, I think a lot of people try to be safe so that they can get the rewards," said Deb Wolfe. Empire said their safety initiative has lowered their high risk insurance policy. Empire has set a company record of 1275 days.



Jim Schwinefus explains our Safety Incentive Program to WXOW TV19

Heated Competition at Empire Charity Chili Cook-Off

Insanely, appetizing smells drifted through Empire on the morning of Wednesday, January 26, 2011. Employees came bearing crock-pots of all shapes and sizes, filled to the brim, with an amazing assortment of chili. Chili was submitted in one or more of three categories; Mild/Medium, Hot/Spicy, and Specialty chili.

Employees buzzed with excitement, Wednesday. Many people commented on how it brought people together at Empire. Goodwill and camaraderie reigned for the day. Several employees were already discussing possibilities on what they would enter next year.

Proceeds from the chili cook-off benefited local food pantry and soup kitchen, Place of Grace. Employees paid \$1.00 per bowl for the chili of their choice. The owner of Empire, Jim Brush, matched 50% of the total raised by employees. Employees raised \$292.00 and as promised, Jim contributed \$146.00. The grand total donated to Place of Grace was \$438.00, plus 25 lbs. of donated food.

Six local celebrities were invited to taste and evaluate the entries. Anchor woman, Amy DuPont and meteorologist, Dan Breeden came from WXOW TV 19. Local radio host from Classic Rock 100.1 FM, Kelly Wilde, loaned us their taste buds. The general manager from the La Crosse Loggers, Chris Goodell, took time from his busy schedule to help Empire. Ciatti's Italian Restaurant owner, Vince Valdez, lent his food expertise, sampling numerous chilis. Rounding out the field of judges, was the house manager for Place of Grace, Michael Kruger.

Judges and employees found it difficult to single out winners from the 22 different varieties entered in the cook-off. Scores were very tight. There was one tie and others won by less than four tenths of a percent in a given category.

First place winners received an award plaque, \$25.00, and bragging rights for the best chili at Empire. Second and third place winners also received certificates.



Celebrity judges (L-R): Vince Valdez, Amy DuPont, and Dan Breeden

(See center spread for more chili photos.)

Mild/Medium Chili Winners

- 1st Place Deb Gilbertson, Digital
 2nd Place Amy Bettis, Art
 3rd Place Cathy Buttell, Art

Hot/Spicy Chili Winners

- 1st Place Brian Searle, Maintenance
 2nd Place Tom Donaldson, Digital
 3rd Place Lisa Slonka, Art

Specialty Chili Winners

- 1st Place Laura Snodgrass, Art
 2nd Place Lindsay Bonnar, Art
 (Tied) Rhonda Peterson, QC
 3rd Place Justine Kruckow, Accounting

Most Popular Chili & Overall Winner

Laura Snodgrass, Art w/ Chicken Fajita Chili

The cook-off was an amazing success. Thanks to all who slaved over hot stoves and transported full crock-pots to work. It was delicious! Many thanks to Art/Marketing, Maintenance, and Digital departments for all of their hard work in organizing, setting up and cleaning up. A special thank you to Jim Brush and Empire for donating supplies and prizes to the cook-off. Most of all thank you to Empire employees, who were most generous to the Place of Grace! ~Amy Bettis

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

caLENDAR

April 8, 2011

**Downtown La Crosse
 Spring Fling Open House**
 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 Phone:(608) 784-0440
www.lacrossedowntown.com



May 17, 2011

**La Crosse County Historical Society
 Spotlight Presentation**
 Swarthout Museum 9th & Main
 in the library 7:00 p.m.
 Phone:608-782-1980
www.lchswb.org



June 4 -5, 2011

FREE Wisconsin Trail Weekend
 Ride free on all Wisconsin State
 Bike Trails
 Phone: 608-781-9570
info@discoveronalaska.com



June 5, 2011

FREE Wisconsin State Park Day
 All Wisconsin State Parks
 June 5th ONLY
 Phone: 608-781-9570
info@discoveronalaska.com



June 4 -5, 2011

FREE Wisconsin Fishing Weekend
 No fishing license required in
 State of Wisconsin.
www.dnr.wi.gov

**For more events
 and activities, visit
www.explorelacrosse.com**

Community Corner.

Twilight Author Book Fundraiser Benefits American Red Cross

For each hardcover copy of *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner: an Eclipse Novella* sold in the U.S. from the first printing, \$1 will be donated to the American Red Cross*.

To date, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group,

has donated \$1.5 million dollars to the American Red Cross International Response Fund from the sales of this addition to Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series.

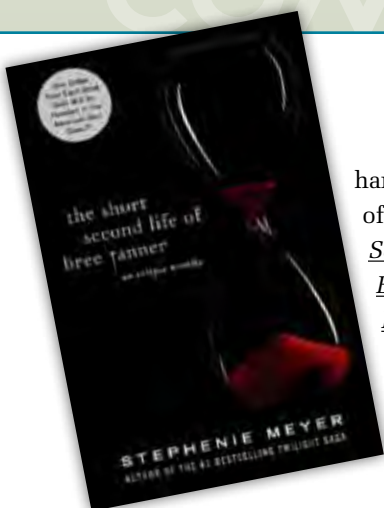
"I'm so grateful that Little, Brown, the American Red Cross, and my fans made this generous gift possible," said Stephenie Meyer. "It's amazing to have the opportunity to help those so greatly in need."

This generous donation supports the victims of countless crises around the world by enabling the American Red Cross to provide immediate relief and long-

term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support.

"Giving back is extremely important to the company," said Hachette Book Group CEO David Young. "So it is particularly gratifying to be able to share our success with an organization as worthy as The American Red Cross."

*Donations will continue until all first-printing copies have been sold or at the end of a two-year period from the initial publication date, whichever is the first to occur. ~Article Courtesy of American Red Cross



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Involvement



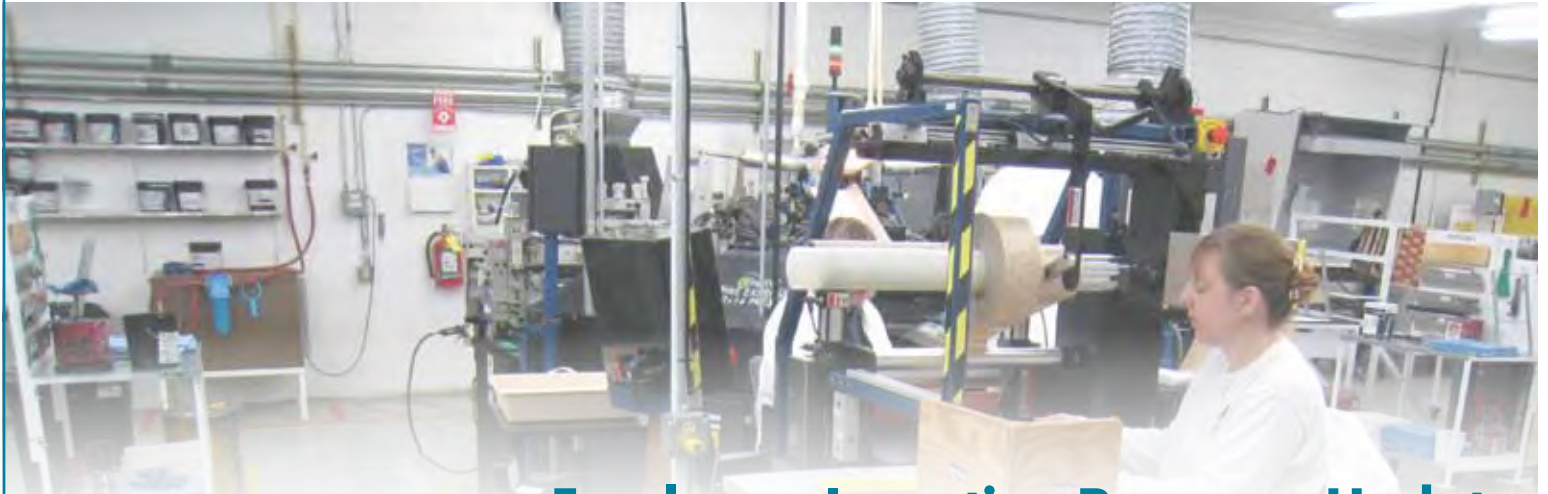
Chili Cook-off Winners, Back row L-R: Justine Krackow, Amy Bettis, Brian Searle, Tom Donaldson, and Lee Vieth. Middle row L-R: Lisa Slonka, Cathy Buttell, and Rhonda Peterson. Seated L-R: Lindsey Bonnar and Laura Snodgrass





employees raised over \$2800
Place of Grace & Polar Plunge





Employee Incentive Program Updates

Once Called Quality Control, Now Called Quality Assurance

At one time it was known as Quality Control; with the changes and improvements taking place at Empire, it is now known as Quality Assurance. Quality Control and Quality Assurance are terms often misunderstood by production personnel. A simple way to remember the difference is that Quality Control checks the products themselves, while Quality Assurance concentrates on the processes used to create those products.

There are three steps to Quality Assurance:

- Control of documents
- Control of non-conformance
- Auditing the process

While quality control issues are being regulated by the supervisors in each department, quality assurance items will be handled by Empire's QA Department. These changes are a large factor in the ongoing process of lean manufacturing.

Empire has retained loss records since 1999. These loss records are tracked through internal losses, customer returns, and incomplete jobs. Records

are categorized by departments and type of non-conformance. Losses have been reduced by 50% since 1999, because we are able to determine which areas suffer high impact losses, and immediately address those issues at hand. When a job is stopped or put on hold, concerns are categorized to discover areas which require improvement, this can help avoid a costly loss.

Through our Lean Steering Committee, supervisors are assigned tasks that address areas in need of improvement. These tasks are put on a policy deployment schedule and given a time line in which to be completed. Doing this at an upper management level, allows Empire to

assemble a team, and obtain needed tools or equipment to address quality assurance issues.

An internal marketing program will be implemented by Empire to keep focused on our Employee Incentive Program. The message is positively aimed at taking ownership of Quality Control and Quality Assurance.

~Rhonda Petereson



The Vinsons Welcome the Troops in Kentucky



Steve and Sherri Vinson traveled to Fort Campbell Army Base in Kentucky



to welcome home their nephew P.F.C Justin R. Frappier, and other members of the 101st Airborne 3BCT FTF Platoon.

They received a little help from their fellow employees in the digital department. The two sided banner shown was designed and printed at Empire.

It is a small token of respect and welcome for those who willingly and selflessly serve in our nation's military. Our prayers follow Justin and his fellow military as they serve.

Left Photo: from L to R Steve Vinson, Jon Schubert, Mark Kabat, Justin Konze, Kevin Gerstenberger, Andy Keidrowski, Tom Donaldson, and Sherri Vinson
Right Photo: Steve and Sherri Vinson

Cutting Your Energy Costs

Blast from the Past...

Illuminating facts about fluorescent bulbs

We really can Change the World by changing just one light bulb. If each household changed one standard bulb for one compact fluorescent bulb, California could:

- Reduce energy use by up to 616 million kilowatt hours of electricity in one year. That's enough energy to light all the households in Sacramento for 690 days - or almost two years!

- Save \$74.7 million a year on household electricity bills.

- Reduce garbage by keeping up to a billion (yes, a billion) bulbs out of the trash. Each fluorescent bulb can last up to 10 times longer than an ordinary bulb, so think of all those bulbs that won't be thrown away.

Other bright ideas:

- Change the bulbs in lights that you use the most, such as the kitchen ceiling lights, living room lamps, bathroom vanity, or porch light

- Keep your home cooler in the summer by using fluorescent lighting. A fluorescent bulb generates 70 percent less heat than a regular bulb.

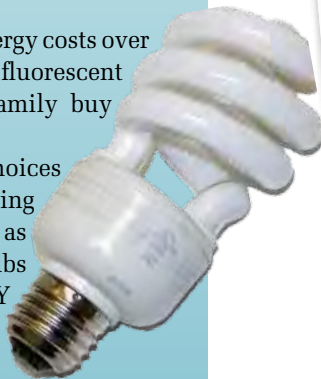
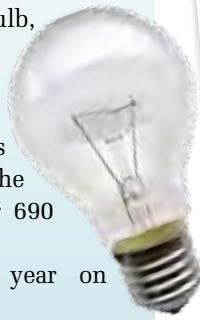
- Save \$30 or more in energy costs over the life of each compact fluorescent bulb. What could your family buy with the extra cash?

Learn about other choices in energy-saving lighting for your home, such as cool halogen or LED bulbs and fixtures or ENERGY STAR lighting. For more information, visit:

www.energystar.gov

www.fypower.com

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/products/ffclight.html>



Deadline Wednesday, February 20, 1980



WHAT'S NEW IN TOWN Empire Screen Printing Art Department

Not necessarily new to the area, but rather expanded and relocated, is the Empire Screen Printing Art Department. The commercial art department extension of Empire Screen Printing is now located on Hwy. 53 south of Holmen, near Viking Custom Homes.

Robert Snodgrass, who has been Empire's Art Director for 6 months, says there are currently thirteen people employed at the facility, which prepares art to be silk screened at the factory. Empire Screen Printing is located on Cty. S, north of Onalaska, where they have been for the past fifteen years.

Most of Empire Screen Printing's business comes from out of town, according to Snodgrass, and they deal primarily with national corporations. Snodgrass, a Holmen resident attended high school in Onalaska, and served in the Air Force as a Photo-Lab Technician.

Cheesy Bratwurst Stew

Submitted by Amy Bettis, Art Department

Ingredients:

- 4-5 Cooked bratwurst, sliced into bite-sized pieces (Works great with leftover grilled brats!)
- 5-6 Medium Potatoes, diced
- 1 Medium Onion, diced
- 1/2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- 2 Cans Cream of Chicken Soup
- 1 Can Cream of Celery Soup
- 3 Cans of Milk
- 8oz. Velveeta Cheese, cubed

Heat olive oil in skillet, sauté onions until soft. Next add all ingredients to a large crockpot. Cook on high/med for 3-4 hours or until potatoes are tender. Serve with a salad and French bread. Serves 10-12.

Stew freezes well and can be made ahead of time.



WHAT'S COOKING

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Marilyn Semlar Retires ~Kathy Vaughan

Longtime screener Marilyn Semlar will be retiring on April 8, 2011. Marilyn began her employment at Empire on April 9, 1979; almost 32 years ago to the day. She remembers her first day learning to screen on a #1 press. She said there were mandatory 9 hour days and Saturdays when she began. Marilyn remarked that one of the hardest things starting was trying to get her tabs put together evenly. Eventually she was asked to train on the #3 press and Arrow. She says she doesn't remember there being any air conditioning in those days, making it very hot and humid, which caused a lot of the screens to fall apart. She says they had one window and could open the door. Of course, there were no polycarbonate jobs at

first. She remembers mostly printing stickers and metal plates. Empire was just beginning to experiment with UV technology. She also worked in the office for a short while, but didn't like as much as screening.

Marilyn remarked that the biggest change has been in the technology and all of the types of jobs that have been produced over



Marilyn Semlar 32 years

the years. She says she will miss the people and the daily routine, but is looking forward to retirement. She plans on spending more time with her grandchildren and maybe learning more on the computer.

We congratulate Marilyn on her retirement, thank her for her many years of dependable, high quality work. We will miss her and wish her many happy days in her journey forward.

Empire will be honoring Marilyn on Friday, April 8th at 11:00 a.m. with a retirement luncheon in the new lunch room. All employees are welcome to attend and wish her the best.

Employee Anniversaries

Employee Announcements

ATTENTION Shutterbugs:

Keep snapping those photos. Empire 2012 calendar theme is Quirky Americana & Unusual Landmarks

Congratulations Empire Employees!

Lost dollars resulting from dirt in screens has been reduced from an average of \$1950± to a record low of \$480 for the Month of January

Congratulations on your retirement

Marilyn Semlar (Screening)
32 years of service to Empire.
We will miss you!

Coulee Region Polar Plunge

Nancy Gilbertson (Office)
Won First Place for the Best Dressed Chicken

Empire volunteers needed for CMN telethon, Sunday June 5, 2011 at Gundersen Clinic

Contact Doug Billings x2311 if you would like to volunteer.

Welcome New Employee!

Austin Cooper*

APRIL

Marilyn Semlar 32 yrs.

Glen Schossow 26 yrs.
Diane Simonson 24 yrs.
David Nordstrom 23 yrs.
Penny Nordstrom 22 yrs.
Troy Stockers 21 yrs.
Randy Lemke 19 yrs.
Pete Fauske 19 yrs.
Kevin Mason 19 yrs.
Jenny Ledman 18 yrs.
Amy Bettis 18 yrs.
James Brom Jr. 17 yrs.
Cathy Buttell* 16 yrs.
Diane Borger 14 yrs.
Bill Feyen 13 yrs.
Cathy McMahon 7 yrs.
Laura Snodgrass 6 yrs.
Mark Klinski 6 yrs.
Keith Gaarder 6 yrs.
Jonathan Meyer 6 yrs.
Rhonda Peterson 4 yrs.
Michelle Winn 4 yrs.
Helen Ziegler 4 yrs.
Justin Boone 1 yr.
Tamara Stenberg 1 yr.
Kyle Stoddard 1 yr.
Mark Kabat 1 yr.
Rebecca McClutchen 1 yr.
Robert Tweed 1 yr.
Curtis Johnson 1 yr.
Richard McDowell 1 yr.
Krystle Roller 1 yr.
Teri Herold 1 yr.
Jesse Baardseth 1 yr.

MAY

Lori Taube 32 yrs.
Ava Grimslid 26 yrs.
Chris Bast 26 yrs.
Lisa Massoth 21 yrs.

Jeffrey Brey 19 yrs.
Sam Sokolik 18 yrs.
Chad Heyroth 16 yrs.
Bonnie Williams 14 yrs.
Dallas Lewis 14 yrs.
Tom Donaldson 14 yrs.
Debra Gilbertson 14 yrs.
Brian Searle 12 yrs.
Donald Olson 11 yrs.
Mark Winchell 10 yrs.
Nancy Sackmaster 7 yrs.
Katie Schaller 6 yrs.
Ed Lee 5 yrs.
Mike Stenberg 5 yrs.
Dave Faas 5 yrs.
Greg Loomis 5 yrs.
Charlene Muller 4 yrs.
Jessica Simonsen 4 yrs.
Autum Jacobs 3 yrs.
Justine Kruckow* 2 yrs.
Pao Yang 1 yr.
Amber Johnson 1 yr.
Lisa Running 1 yr.
Brian Hundt 1 yr.
Justin Konze 1 yr.
Jean Marie Jones 1 yr.
Chase Penkaleski 1 yr.
Rose Chamoun 1 yr.
Nikki Betts* 1 yr.
Courtney Reagles* 1 yr.
Megan Fortun* 1 yr.

JUNE

Dawn Gorniak 27 yrs.
Debbie Michel 26 yrs.
Sophie Cornforth 23 yrs.
Lisa Collins 18 yrs.
Russell Kuehn 16 yrs.
Rebecca Stark 15 yrs.
Sheila Fox 12 yrs.
Robert Fischer 9 yrs.

Suzanne Robinson 7 yrs.
Matt Vanderloop 7 yrs.
Rachael Gilkes 5 yrs.
Chris Hundt 5 yrs.
Carina Olson 5 yrs.
Sarah Erickson 4 yrs.
Curt Blair 4 yrs.
Patricia Stenberg* 4 yrs.
Adam Luedtke 3 yrs.
Codi Jacobs* 3 yrs.
Mike Wolf* 3 yrs.
Raymond Stannard 2 yrs.
Jamin Bishofsky 2 yrs.
Jayda Schiffer* 2 yrs.
Deanna Stanton 1 yr.
Kristin Paradise 1 yr.
Katie Kaiser 1 yr.
George Yang 1 yr.
Scott Yang 1 yr.
Steve Yang 1 yr.
Debbie Lawrence 1 yr.
Rose Ziegler 1 yr.
Wade Mikunda 1 yr.
Aaron Gittens 1 yr.
Nathan Monhaut* 1 yr.
Alex Vaughan* 1 yr.
Edmund Klajda* 1 yr.
Matt Schwier* 1 yr.

*Part-time employees



QUALITY POLICY

Empire Screen Printing has an ongoing commitment to fully satisfy our customer. Through continual improvement in all aspects of our business, we supply the best product and service in the screen printing industry, in the most efficient and professional manner possible.

Coordinators: Doug Billings	Contributors: Rhonda Peterson
Layout Design: Cathy Buttell Kathy Vaughan
Photographers: Jennifer Schloesser Chad Ellickson
..... Troy Stockers, Amy Bettis Keith Cook
..... Keith Cook, Amanda Kuehl Amy Bettis
Proofreaders: Lindsay Bonnar Steve Vinson
..... Clark Martin Sherie Vinson

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER: June 27, 2011

All articles and announcements can be submitted to: Doug Billings (2311) or Amy Bettis (2371)