

Norskedalen Fall photo taken by:  
Kevin Gerstenberger, Indigo Dept.

# above

# beyond

# EMPIRE

THE ART OF PRINTING

Fall 2015

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**GREEN TIER**

Advantage: Business Advantage: Environment

## Production Capacity Improved by 25% ~John Freismuth

In order to meet customer demand **Empire has increased its production capacity by 25%**. What did we do as a company to reach that goal? It wasn't any one specific thing but a cumulative total of several things.

We are continuing to implement environmentally friendly UV LED technology to our Small Value Stream (SVS) with the addition of another 12x14 carousel press. **Now 75% of jobs run in our SVS use this energy efficient, ozone free technology.** We are working towards using UV LED technology throughout our entire plant.

This fall we also added a large format 40x56, 6-color carousel press to our Large Value Stream (LVS). This new press was fitted with an external registration system designed by

Empire's machine shop. Our custom system improved registration from  $\pm .030''$  color to color to within  $\pm .005''$  color to color. **That's an 600% gain in press performance!**

With the increased press capacity we also needed to increase our die cutting capacity. Empire added a new Kress die cut press and one new Barry die cut press to meet demand.

We do not plan to stop with the recent equipment additions. Plans are in the works to design and build a 12-color, 38x50 carousel press equipped with UV LED technology and our custom registration system by Fall of 2016.

All of this is made possible by skills and talents of our employees. Thank you for your dedication, ingenuity and hard work.

**M&R** **Insignia**  
mrprint.com 4056

FORK PRESSURE GAMES REGULATOR



Adding to our Large Value Stream  
our new 40x56 Carousel Press





# SAFETY AWARENESS NEWS

## Safety Milestone Met

~ Safety Committee



Our safety record has been steadily increasing. As of October 15, 2015 we are at 244 days or just over 8 months with no lost time accidents.

Thank you all employees for a job well done. We celebrated with a catered meal prepared by Festival Foods and conducted a safety reward drawing—10 chances to win \$20.

Keep up the good work. Don't hesitate to hold each other accountable for proper safety procedures, such as, wearing your personal protective equipment (PPE) and maintaining 5S in each department. A clean workplace is a safer workplace.

We have a little over 4 months to reach the next milestone, 365 days. Work smart, stay safe.

## Electrical Safety – Lock Out Tag Out Training

~ Amy Bettis

This fall on September 29th and October 1st Empire conducted an Electrical Safety and Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) training for all supervisors and key personnel.

Employees learned about basic electrical safety and how to take a proactive approach to avoid accidents, rather than a reactive approach to an accident. Electricity is so much an integral part of our everyday lives that we tend to overlook its dangers.

In the U.S. LOTO protects over 3.3 million workers at 1 million firms annually. Since its inception in 1970 electrical fatalities in manufacturing have been reduced from 55% to 20%

Training outlined the inherent risks when electrical safety is disregarded. Risks include electrical shocks which can lead to severe burns, cardiac arrest, crushing/pinch point injuries, internal organ/tissue damage. Other electrical accidents can involve falls or explosions. LOTO procedures prevent the accidental equipment start up or energization, that could result in an accident.

There are 3 main reasons why we have a written Electrical Safety/LOTO policy.

1.) Ensure employee safety and hold each other accountable for best safety practices

2.) Compliance with OSHA Safety Standard CFR1910.147 which applies to electrical safety and LOTO

3.) Compliance with customer audits. These customers want to make sure they are doing business with a solid, reputable company who abides by laws and approved safety standards



Lee V. & Jen S. completing their test on electrical safety

Remember it only takes ONE lapse in safety for an accident to occur. ALWAYS follow recommended safety protocols.

## New Employee Orientation

~ Amy Bettis

As our company grows, training responsibilities need to change and keep pace with our growth. With 300+ employees that is a lot of training. The QMS kaizen (see article page 6) helped develop a standard HR Process, where none existed before.

On Friday, October 9, 2015, 4 employees participated in the orientation,

with another 7 scheduled for the following week.. This process falls under the direction of Empire's HR Department, and is conducted by the Training Coordinator.

All new hires should be covering the following topics before they hit the production floor; new hire paperwork, policy handbook, company mission,

vision and core values. New employees also receive numerous safety trainings, recycling, sustainability and ISO training.

Not only does general training become standardized across all three shifts, it allows supervisors and employee mentors to move forward with other more job specific training.

# safety committee

**Safety Coordinator:**

Keith Cook.....R & D

**Committee Members:**

Lee Vieth..... Plant Manager

John Johnson..... Operations Coord.

Autum Jacobs..... Human Resources

Dawn Adamson ..... Accounting/Payroll

Amy Bettis ..... Training Coord.

Tom Donaldson ..... Digital

Nancy Gilbertson..... Customer Service

Curt Johnson..... IT/Networking

Andy Kiedrowski ..... Large Value Stream

Jay Yehle ..... Heating/Cooling

## Committed to Safer Waterways ~Troy Stockers

What does it mean to be a part of the surface operations program of the Coast Guard Auxiliary? Last November 15 people asked that question. I, **Troy Stockers** (Project Manager, Art Dept.), was one of them.

Ten months later, myself and 4 new Boat Crewmen in the La Crosse Flotilla can give you some answers. During those 10 months we spent countless hours learning—45 hours in classroom and another 20-30 hours on the water achieving this goal. We were required to study the 898-page Coast Guard Boat Crew Seamanship Manual. Reviews were conducted by a Coast Guard Qualifications Examiner (QE). On the water we had to demonstrate our abilities as helmsmen and watchstanders. The QE observed and assessed our proficiency at man overboard procedures in addition to towing another vessel, anchoring and docking. We had to pass 8 USCG mandatory courses and 2 incident command system classes. We also participated in a 4-hour team coordination training course and an operations workshop.

Why would anyone go to such trouble for a ribbon and a certificate? Because we are Coast Guard Auxiliarists and we care about making it safer on the water for the recreational boating public. As certified crew members, we patrol the waters of our community throughout the summer months and help any boaters we encounter.

Without the US Coast Guard Auxiliary community fireworks displays on the banks the Mississippi River couldn't be held. Without USCGA, stranded boaters would be on their own. Without USCGA, Riverfest, Airfest, Fish Days, Steamboat Days, and other local celebrations would be less safe. On busy weekends myself and my fellow crew members, assist the Towboats through the city of La Crosse. Without the USCGA to properly patrol the river, these activities would not happen.

As a newly certified Boat Crewman of the USGA, I am proud and focused on my increased responsibilities. I plan to honor the Coast Guard motto...

*"Semper Paratus—Always Prepared!"*

## Air Force Update — Mike Smith ~ Cindy Brush

Last May Mike Smith, my son left his job at Empire to enlist in the Air Force. He is doing wonderfully. Mike first went to Lackland, Texas for 6 weeks of Air Force basic training. After graduation from basic he was stationed at Port Hueneme Naval Base, teaming up Navy recruits for tech school, and learned about becoming a Vehicle Maintenance Specialist. Mike and the other airmen, were separated from that group and are currently studying maintenance on all Air force vehicles.

In addition to his vehicle maintenance training Mike also completed classes on leadership. Of that class 6 airmen were chosen to be squadron leaders. Mike earned the privilege of wearing the green squadron leader rope. He will be done with school this November, at which time, he will be allowed to come home for 2 weeks.

After his well deserved break, Mike will be stationed at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. He will be assigned to a special squadron, called the Red Horse Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers. Their mission is similar to that of the U.S. Navy Seabees and the Army Heavy Construction.

Needless to say, we are all so proud of Mike. He is loving the Air Force! Thanks to all Empire employees for your well wishes... Mike says, "Hi!"

If you would like to drop a note to Mike, your message can be sent c/o Cindy Brush at Empire Screen Printing. Messages will be sent on once Mike has a mailing address established.



## Why We Hire Veterans

~Amy Bettis

At Empire we know first that hiring employees with military experience brings many benefits. We would like to recognize the following employees for their service and what value they bring to Empire each and every day.

Curt Blair	Ray Feitl
John Freismuth	Steve Johnson
Mark Klinski	Robert Kranski
Steve Lechnir	Jeffrey Meyer
Donald Olson	Michael Parker
Nicholas Patchen	Jim Schweinefus
Steve Stenberg	Troy Stockers
Ron Vian	Jim Weber
Chris McMahan	Justin Peterson
Pete Fauske (Ret.)	Mike Smith*

This is what our employees with military service bring to the table...

- They come from a goal oriented culture—always complete the task or mission at hand.
- Veterans have ingrained leadership talents that are developed early, in most cases at 19-20 years of age.
- Veterans take their responsibilities seriously, because they grasp the impact of their decisions.
- Veterans are good decision makers. Military personnel need to determine the best course of action in seconds.
- Military personnel are very straightforward and are not afraid of telling bosses when an idea could use a second look.
- Veterans are extremely capable in overcoming adversity in any given situation.
- As a whole veterans are resourceful and independent. As a group will most likely start their own business.
- The military knows the meaning of hard work. When deployed, there aren't holidays or weekends. Your job and your life demands complete focus.
- The government pays for veteran education, allowing veterans to develop their skills and education even further.

On this Veteran's Day, please remember these employees. Their past/current service makes our lives at Empire easier. THANK YOU!



## GPI Conference, Cleveland OH ~Doug Billings

The GPI Semi-Annual Meeting was held in Cleveland Ohio. This is a two-day event John Freismuth and myself, Doug Billings attended.

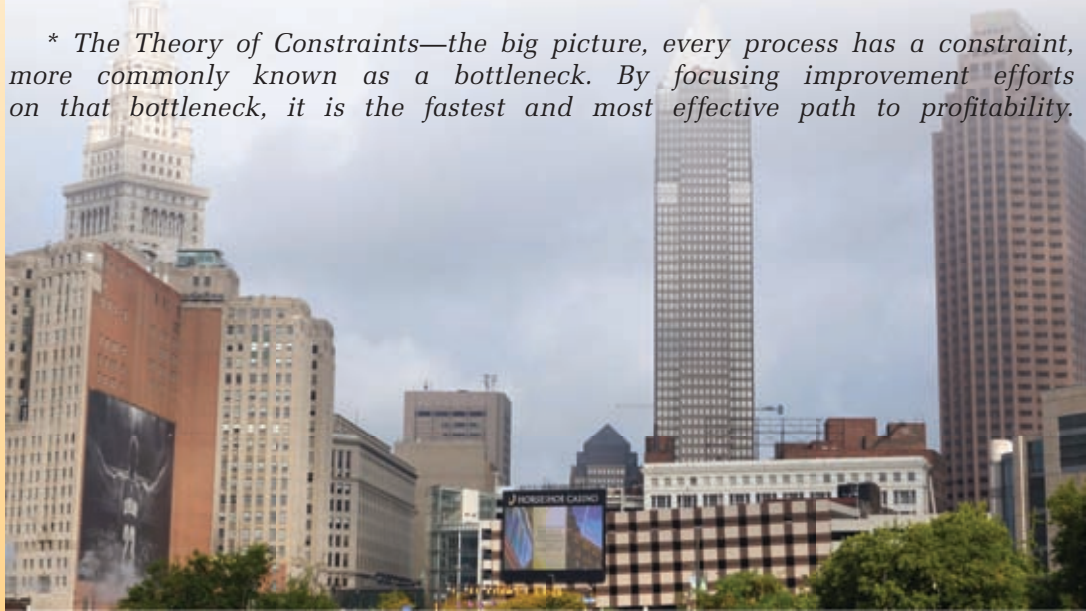
The focus was on technical subjects, such as new materials, processes, regulations and industry trends. The conference also addressed key business issues on subjects affecting a printer's bottom line.

So who and what is GPI? GPI stands for Graphic and Product Identification. GPI is an organization comprised of companies such as Empire who produce and manufacture membrane switches, overlays, touch screens, instrument clusters, front panels,

nameplates, labels, decorative trim, dials and scales. Our President John Freismuth is currently serving a term as the president of GPI. Check out their website, [www.gpionline.org](http://www.gpionline.org).

Highlights of the meeting included speakers such as Dr. Lisa Lang who is the expert in the Theory of Constraints,\* and Brain Hart who spoke on Digital Marketing. Other speakers covered network security, lasers, and robotics/automation. These speakers combined with the invaluable interaction with our industry peers are key to planning for the future.

*\* The Theory of Constraints—the big picture, every process has a constraint, more commonly known as a bottleneck. By focusing improvement efforts on that bottleneck, it is the fastest and most effective path to profitability.*



## Heading to Oshkosh ~Amy Bettis



Our Creative Director/Sustainability Coordinator, Jennifer Schloesser (pictured above) has been invited to participate on a discussion panel at the 8th Annual Sustainability Business Council Conference at UW-Oshkosh on December 10, 2015. This conference provides a great opportunity for businesses to learn about best sustainability practices from each other.

As a conference panelist Jennifer will be presenting a segment about the Green Tier reporting process and how we recorded our EMS Annual Reports. Her expertise in this area will help other companies navigate the record keeping process so they can become successfully Green Tier Certified as well.

## Because We're Family ~Jim & Cindy Brush

We want our employees to enjoy the holidays. Cindy & I will be pledging \$2500 of personal funds to help Empire families in need this holiday season. Together with members of the Helping Hand Nomination Committee we will chose 10 Empire families to whom we will award \$250 to help make their Christmas a little merrier.

Nominations may be submitted by employees for the deserving Empire employee and his/her family. If you know of a fellow employee in need please fill out a nomination form, put in a sealed envelope and turn it into Plant Manager, Lee Vieth or place it in the red HR box outside of Lee's office. **Self-nominations are encouraged.**

Please be detail specific and thorough as possible so that the nomination committee can make an informed decision. ALL un-signed or incomplete nomination forms will be excluded—make sure form is complete and has proper signatures.

**Deadline for nominations is Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2015**

Empire Helping Hand nomination forms will be available in both lunchrooms

*Jim & Cindy's Helping Hand for the Holidays*

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shift: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Required: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shift: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept.: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Self-nominations are welcome\*\***

If self-nomination signature required: \_\_\_\_\_ **UN-signed nominations will NOT be considered. Please be specific. If necessary use other side or separate sheet of paper.**

\_\_\_\_\_ because...

Please give a helping hand this holiday season to \_\_\_\_\_

## Save the Date!!

**Saturday Dec. 19th  
Empire Company  
Christmas Party**

**Stoney Creek Inn  
5:00pm-midnight  
(Employee +1)**

**Details coming soon!**





## A Russian Spy in Our Midst? ~ Maria Selezneva



Maria Selezneva, CS/Engineering

Hello Empire. As you all probably know by now, you've got a Russian spy working among you—me. Just kidding. Another popular version is that I am a mail order bride—wrong again. What am I doing here then?

It all started 5 yrs. ago with a student exchange program between the two sister cities, La Crosse, WI and my city of birth, Dubna, Russia. At that point I didn't even know where WI was on the map! But it didn't matter. The idea of going across the globe, getting to know a whole new world excited me and took my breath away!

It was a great opportunity to improve my language and considered as internship for my second major, interpreting. I learned about another culture, customs, people and discovered an adventurer in me. It was indeed the most amazing and memorable experience of my life.

I liked it so much I came again next year. That was when I met my future husband, Jeremy Saley, who, also works for Empire. After I earned my degrees, which now collect dust on the shelf, I moved to the U.S. and got married. So, I guess, I was some sort of Russian bride after all.

I never planned on moving to this country when I was visiting it for the first time, yet here I am. And, since it's as far from my usual field of study as it can be, I never imagined I once will be called an engineer, but yet again, I surprisingly find myself to enjoy it and seem to be not all that bad at it. What can I say, life is full of amazing surprises. Plus my dad, who was always hard to please, finally approves of what I do for living. No wonder, he himself had once worked in printing industry for quite some time, fixing big presses and bringing colorful decals for me to play with. Another coincidence? Maybe so, but I am happy with the way things turn out.

### USA vs. Russia

I am often asked what's the biggest difference between Russia and America, or what's the silliest stereotype. Here are some facts and thoughts on that.

Despite what some of you might think, we are not communist in Russia. In fact, the U.S. itself with all its talks and care about community is now much closer to Karl Marks' definition. But it's not necessarily a bad thing. Russia has come to embrace both democracy and capitalism, which most definitely is a good thing - it was hard enough to be let in the U.S. even without the iron curtain - but we also inherited a nice legacy of socialism, like free healthcare and health insurance, free education.

Roads on the other hand are real bad. To make a comparison, a random back country road in WI is better than the main highway from Dubna to Moscow. We've never heard about left turn lanes, bike lanes or divided interstates with rest areas and welcome centers. We have heard though about every day several-hour traffic jams all over big cities. Apparently, we don't know how to build roads or don't invest enough taxpayers money, which - well, must be going towards healthcare and education. That explains why I studied in Russia but choose to travel around U.S.

Never mind the bad infrastructure, Russia's system of public transportation is developed and popular. However school buses like in the U.S. do not exist, students usually walk. Every district of the city has elementary, middle and high school within one building. Thanks to that I went to the same school for 11 years, with same class mates and teachers.

We are allowed to drink alcohol outdoors and smoke inside. Drinking age is 18. Heavy partying, like in any other country, sometimes leads to police involvement. In Russia it's rarely followed up by huge fines or jail. Drinking and driving is not an exception, but the fear of losing license for 1.5 years makes people stay away from it. A year and a half is a little harsh, on the other hand, we'd never imagine losing a license for a car over riding a bicycle.

Recycling is new in Russia and most people don't do it yet. But don't judge us - recycling containers appeared on streets of Russia only a couple years ago. Their use is voluntary and it will take us some time to get environmentally-aware and self-conscious, just like it took some time in the

U.S. And for now, anybody can offload an old couch or broken tv outside of his apartment building or throw a Christmas tree right out of the 5th floor window. The city, whether it likes it or not, will end up taking care of it. But don't worry, it will get back at everybody with a sweet revenge when it's winter and the city won't plow until traffic starts stalling in deep snow, because there is no money in the municipal budget and they already plowed last week.

You'd never see a rabbit or a squirrel on the streets of my city. Even if they could survive in that concrete jungle, they sure would be hunted by other wild life, for example, packs of stray dogs. Feral animals might scare you, but they do not surprise anybody in Russia. There isn't an established system of catching them and arranging their fate. Most people like and feed them, but there are others that maintain violence. I think the good in people prevails though. All 3 of my kitty-cats were brought in from the street.

We like our president. Not to brag, but Vladimir Putin is approved by nearly 90% of electorate, and that means something. While I know, some people abroad don't like him, I say, they don't have to, after all he is a president of Russia. We don't care of his divorce and other personal affairs, he is good at what he was voted for.

What else. It doesn't always snow in Russia. We do not all drink vodka as a sole liquid and don't normally have bears walking down the street. However, alcoholism rate is pretty high and some people have strange pet preferences, but it wouldn't be out of line of other commonly strange things.

Russia is wild. Lots of areas of economy and social behavior are left to self regulation, where one might see chaos and unfairness, and another - grounds of natural selection and competition. Some might see their freedom. Call it what you may, but in all aspects of life things don't always come easy. According to a Russian saying "We are not looking for easy ways.", that's how you turn out to be strong and resourceful people and learn to appreciate simple things.

All things considered, and, truth be told, by "USA vs. Russia" I don't mean figuring out which one's the best - that would be impossible - I compare my country of origin and residency because I love them both and I will to understand them better!



### Picnic-schmicnic, Sounds Like Torture-Right? ~Renee Kotek

Picnic-Schmicnic...yeah spending more hours seeing the same people you already see 40+ hours each week. Sounds like torture-right?

Finally a time when you're not judged by your attendance, how long your lunch break is and how much standing around time you do. Sounds like torture- right?

Finally a time when you can get to know that guy you sit next to everyday and then actually meet his wife and kids (until then were just imagined). Sounds like torture-right?

Finally a time to engage in conversation with that one lady you hear paged over the loud speaker but until today didn't realize that was her. Sounds like torture- right?

Finally a time my husband could meet the folks I talk about everyday. In addition he saw the guy that lived up the road from him his whole life -he didn't realize he worked at Empire and then the guy that helped his family farm when he was 3 ft tall. Sounds like torture- right?

Finally a time to relax and enjoy the beautiful day, the food and the company you're surrounded by. Sounds like torture- right?

The Empire Company Picnic was anything but an additional chore or assignment to partake in. It was a wonderful day to gather together, get caught up in the chatter, the face painting and the food. We had a great turn out of employees and many of those that did not sign up ended up

coming anyway. We had some awesome face painters that went above and beyond (I'm not talking about the big group of balloons that decided the tree was a better place to live). They stayed well beyond the time established and I don't recall seeing a kid leave with less than two "tattoos".

We had more than enough food to accommodate everyone and had plenty to disperse at the end of the day. We had several of our awesome suppliers and vendors pitch in and donate prizes to the employees. There was a request to all employees to sign in to get placed in the drawings-this was a sign up that didn't mean you had to be present to win (no penalty if you had to leave early) but a Thank You for participating. Every employee left with a goodie (if not received it the following Monday)-how awesome is that!

The Empire Company Picnic was not meant to be an event where employees expected a goodie but rather were rewarded with a goodie-small or XXL. It was an event that hasn't taken place in several years and was an honor to have. It was an event that hopefully everyone enjoyed and told all his or her work friends! It was a chance to integrate the "newbies" (and also refresh the "oldies") to the Empire family and encourage a positive atmosphere for the year to come. Sounds like torture-right?



S-w-w-e-e-t!!!! Renee Kotek (Customer Service)



Balloons before the great escape



\$20 will get Kathy Inglett (SVS) a lot of duct tape!



Jason Harnisch (Doming), a volleyball casualty



Combat volleyball!!!



Great location, with plenty of sun & shade



Enjoying the the picnic fair



Bean bags...just as fun but less dangerous than volleyball with John Friesmuth



## Vendor & Business Partner Thank You ~ Amy Bettis

Many thanks to our vendors and various business partners, their generosity donating prizes for our company picnic was impressive. They helped make a great day even better!

<b>Zund America</b> .....	\$50 Home Depot gift card
<b>Cut Guru</b> .....	2-T-Shirts by CutGuru
<b>Barsol Solvents</b> .....	Golf shoe bag, golf balls, can koosie, hat
<b>Regal Plastics</b> .....	Titleist Golf balls, 2-Regal hats, \$25.00 Grizzly's gift card
<b>Lawrence &amp; Frederick, Inc.</b> .....	Heavy Duty Foil Wrap
<b>MacDermid Autotype</b> .....	2-\$50 Kwik Trip gift cards, 2-MacDermid Polos
<b>GPA</b> .....	\$25 Kohl's gift card, \$25 Macy's gift card
<b>Piedmont Plastics</b> .....	4-\$25 Visa gift cards
<b>Tekra</b> .....	2-Umbrellas, Grill Set, 2-Tekra polos 2-Tekra bottle openers, 2-Flash lights
<b>Health Traditions</b> .....	Fleece blanket, cutting board Duffel bag, wheelie cooler
<b>Hewlett Packard</b> .....	6-Techie Pouches w/ Adpaters, Addi Bluetooth Speaker Brookstone Headphones, HP Ladies pullover, HP Sport-Tek 1/2 Zip Pullover
<b>Sun Chemical</b> .....	8-\$25 Walmart gift cards
<b>Sabic</b> .....	5-Wireless Bluetooth Speakers
<b>Midland Paper</b> .....	2-Wireless Bluetooth Speakers, \$25 Kwik Trip gift card
<b>Achem</b> .....	\$25 Visa gift card
<b>Magnum Magnetic</b> .....	2-\$25 Walmart gift cards
<b>Ritrama</b> .....	\$50 Festival Foods gift card, \$50 Gander Mountain gift card the following Ritrama gear: 7-Ball Caps, 2- Polos, 5- Coolers, Sticky Pad 5-pens, Ritrama Gclip (Golf tee holer), Callaway golf balls
<b>CMN</b> .....	Cooler, 2-CMN T-Shirts, 6 of each-can koozies, notepads, pens CMN bracelets, mini-first aid kits, hot/cold therapy packs
<b>ULINE</b> .....	Smokey Joe Grill
<b>Autum Jacobs</b> .....	Purse
<b>Primex Plastics</b> .....	\$50 Lowe's gift card
<b>Express Employment</b> .....	5-Frisbees, 2-Umbrellas, 5-ice scrapers 2-flash lights, folding camp chair
<b>MacTac</b> .....	2-\$25 Walmart gift cards
<b>Marco Die Supplies</b> .....	2-\$50 Olive Garden gift cards
<b>Toppers</b> .....	1 Large of any choice pizza
<b>Dalco</b> .....	\$25 Buffalo Wild Wings gift card, \$25 Outback gift card \$25 Mastercard gift card
<b>Car Tattoos</b> .....	39-Assorted Mens/Womens Lethal Threat T-Shirts
<b>Great Northern</b> .....	2-Titleist golf balls, 4-GNC hats 2-Climate GNC polo shirts, 2-\$20 Kwik Trip gift cards
<b>Mosaica Group</b> .....	2-\$100 Dick's Sporting Goods gift cards
<b>Sefar</b> .....	4-\$50 Home Depot gift cards



Rachel Gilkes (Doming), adorns Brooklyn, daughter of Autum (HR) & Codi Jacobs (Machine Shop)



Ooops, there they go!



Jamin Bishofsky (Die Making) won some pretty sweet headphones.



Boston, son of Autum (HR) & Codi Jacobs (Machine Shop). "Can we keep him?"



Look what Jordan Coleman (LVS) scored at the company picnic





Kaizen Team (L-R): Amy Bettis, Steve Johnson, Doug Billings, Jen Schloesser & Alexis Marsh's stunt double, Autum Jacobs

## QMS Kaizen - Building the HR Process within the QMS ~ Jennifer Schloesser

Many of you by now have heard of Empire's Quality Management System (QMS). Earlier this year we created a central network drive to store all of the company's policies, core processes, and resources, which are located in the QMS or 'Q' drive. A QMS style guide was created to help implement and standardize how to create, save and locate QMS information. The largest area of the QMS is our core processes, where supervisors will need to create standard operating procedures (SOPs), including: processes, procedures, work instructions, job breakdown and specs.

With the completion of our style guide, we tested our QMS instructions and held a kaizen in our newly expanded HR department. We needed to create necessary SOPs to hire, orient, train and retain employees.

Prior to the kaizen, department supervisors did the interviewing and hiring and each person had their 'own way,' of doing things. Much of our existing information was on personal desktops, file folders and saved in multiple locations. We needed to make this a consistent process and so the HR "Employee Advantage" kaizen was scheduled to improve and strengthen Empire's HR department.

The kaizen scope was to create SOPs within the HR department utilizing the QMS style guide. Items that were not in

our scope were payroll and our policy handbook. Team members consisted of Amy Bettis, Doug Billings, Alexis Marsh, Steve Johnson and Jennifer Schloesser.

On the first day of the kaizen we worked on breaking down the HR process, to determine the functioning processes within HR. We determined that we have 7 distinct processes. These processes are as follows: Hiring, Onboarding, Retention, Separation, Statistics, Records and Compliance (See diagram).



We focused on the style guide and broke the HR processes into procedures, work instructions and job breakdowns.

We also standardized forms, assigned form #'s, created support documents and other resources such as standard hiring questions, as well as offer and rejection letters to name a few.

Once information was compiled, we created a single document capturing all of the SOPs named **1\_0 HR Process.pdf**. From that single document, links\* were created to corresponding forms and other information that was required to perform that task.

During the kaizen we were able to address many of the concerns that we wanted to cover. We soon realized our scope was too broad to complete in the 4 days that we set aside. So, we created a task list and deadlines to work on the remaining items to ensure that these are getting done.

Since the kaizen, we have implemented the hiring process and part of the onboarding process, which includes a first day orientation class for new hires. There is more work that needs to be done, but we're moving in the right direction. Our employees are our greatest assets. By focusing on creating standard processes in our HR department, we are able to hire, train, orient and retain employees that fit our core values. This is the 'Employee Advantage' that is a win win for all of us.

*\*Please note, links have yet to be finalized both Mac and PC.*



Mapping out the HR process



Developing the new employee onboarding concept



Creating form & function within the QMS



# T.E.A.M. Development ~Marilyn Heinz

What began as a simple way to recognize my teammates in the customer service department by honoring their milestone anniversaries, quickly escalated into a company wide recognition. When word spread of the milestone anniversary recognition, it wasn't long before Doug Billings approached me to create a morale committee, that is how The Empire Ambassador's of Morale (aka T.E.A.M.) was formed.

The original concept was to get the group started with core members like Amy Bettis (HR/Marketing), Autum Jacobs (HR), Chris Schultz (Customer Service) and myself (receptionist) along with Doug Billings serving as an advisor. Next we will begin to rotate in other Empire employees to keep ideas and viewpoints fresh. A rotation would be for a year term. I have pancake breakfast, walking tacos, etc. All funds raised are being kept in a T.E.A.M fund in the accounting department. To provide transparency, there will be accountability charts put up around the building where everyone can see what the funds are being used for. Empire continues to purchase the balloons for the milestone anniversaries beginning at 15 years and up.

Future plans include looking into ways to improve communication within Empire, recognize the positive efforts of employees and have enough funds to pay a partial cost of fun gatherings outside of work.

T.E.A.M. members normally meet once a month however we are flexible to have meetings in the mornings or afternoons to accommodate your work schedules. You may also be needed to help work at an event.

I would like to encourage each and every Empire employee to consider a rotation with T.E.A.M. You can let one of the core members know you are interested or you can add your name to the sign up sheet. You will find one of the sign up sheets (wanted poster) in the old lunchroom on the door where all T.E.A.M. information is displayed. And, the other one (wanted poster) is in the new lunchroom on the T.E.A.M. bulletin board.

I have been with Empire for about 17 months and I believe in this company and all my co-workers. We are all on the same Empire team and our mission is simply to implement a little "family" fun feeling while continuing to keep a safe and productive work environment.

# Empire Mentoring Students in Business

*~Doug Billings*

Empire welcomed 40 students from the Holmen High School Entrepreneurship class for a tour. Traditionally in the past, entrepreneurial classes used the "lemonade stand" approach of how to start a company: 1) come up with an idea, 2) execute the idea, 3) do the accounting (revenue, costs, etc.).

Today, students work with local businesses to get a real world approach to business. Empire is a great case study of how a company was built on one person's idea to do things their own way in the true entrepreneurship style.

Doug Kuehn and Doug Billings gave the students a tour of the production and office areas. Students had many questions along the way ranging from sales, profit, how much equipment cost, and how we advertise. It was a great group of students and we look forward to next year's tour.

# T.E.A.M. Notes ~Amy Bettis

Many thanks to all who have shared in the fun with T.E.A.M. events. If you have a suggestion or an event idea for employees, please send it on to a T.E.A.M. member.

Past events we have held so far this year include:

- **Pancake Breakfast**, Sept. 16th  
25 people participated.
- **Walking Taco Day**, Oct. 16th  
60 participants enjoyed this unique dining experience.
- **Halloween Spirit Award** goes to the Maintenance Department for the best pumpkin
- **Halloween Costume Contest** winners were

**1st Place** - Ed Lee (Art) as Frodo Baggins

**2nd Place** - Rhonda Peterson (QC) & Joann Anderson (QC) as the Skeleton Sisters

**3rd Place** - Rockin' Steve Remen (Customer Service)

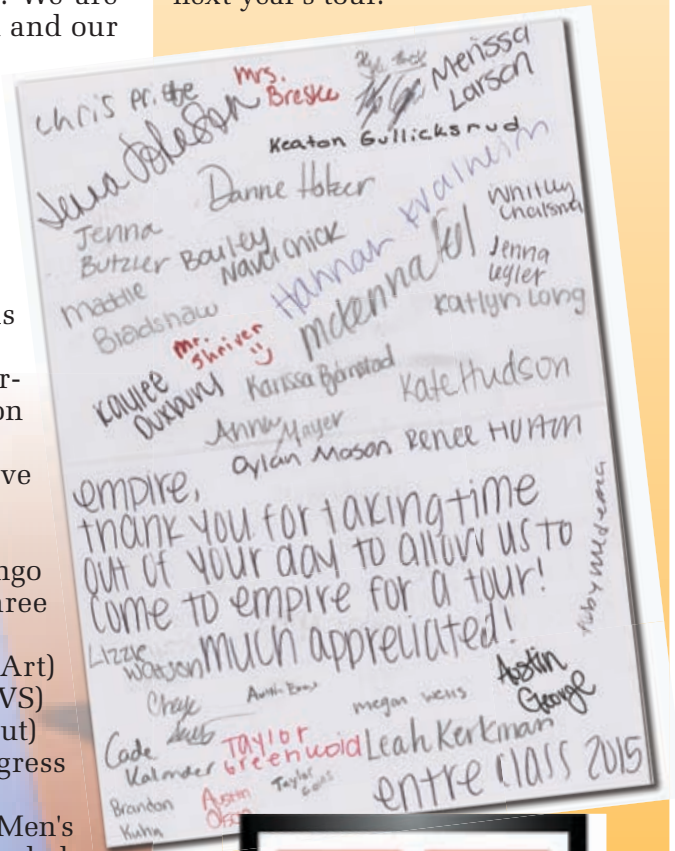
- Employee T.E.A.M. Bingo has currently produced three winners

**GAME 1** - Troy Stockers (Art)

**GAME 2** - Jared Papenfuss (LVS) & Kyle Stoddard (Digital/ICut)

**GAME 3** (Blackout!) - In progress

- **No Shave November** for Men's Health. Prizes will be awarded, contest details coming soon. Stop shaving now!



# GO T.E.A.M.!!!





# Put Your Money Where the Miracles Are —Amy Bettis & Rena Cash

Let me introduce you to our Holiday Card winner & our 5 CMN heroes. These CMN ambassadors & their families will be out in the community raising funds for CMN through the sale of their holiday and hero cards with the help of Empire Screen Printing.

Braden Ball designer of the 2015 CMN Hospitals Holiday Card, is a 16 year old from Prairie du Chien, WI. Braden has an undiagnosed genetic disease with a variety of individual sub-diagnoses. Some of these include: gastrostomy tube in place, low bone density, chronic static encephalopathy, malignant hyperthermia, GERD, tic disorder, bi-lateral femoral & tibial osteotomies. Braden is honored to be able to help raise funds for CMN because CMN has always been there to help him.

Mya Berkowitch has Down Syndrome & related health issues such as cognitive, physical & speech delays; vision problems; & a digestive disorder. She was also recently diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. All this translates to frequent appointments with specialists in La Crosse.

"Traveling to see specialists can get very expensive," says Mya's

mother, Jenel, knowingly. "CMN Hospitals helped with gas & meal vouchers, which we are personally grateful for."

Early in his young life, Logan Kelm, our second hero was diagnosed with merosin-deficient congenital muscular dystrophy. Logan has already experienced some tough times & can expect challenges ahead. He's at risk for heart issues, respiratory illnesses, scoliosis, joint contractures. CMN helps ease the burden faced by Logan & his family. "Most people don't realize how expensive & difficult it is to get equipment for children who have special needs. CMN Hospitals makes the process so much more bearable," says Logan's mom.

Siblings, Tannek & Eloya Gilbertson, our third & fourth heroes, were both born with their intestines outside their bodies. Surgeries, days after each of their births, successfully placed their intestines inside, but it took a long time for them to learn to eat. Their parents had to deal with vomiting & intestinal blockages requiring surgery.

Even after each birth when Tannek & Eloya went home CMN Hospitals reached out to help when they needed special formula & providing gas cards for

the many trips to doctors' appointments. "CMN Hospitals is always there when you need them. It gives parents hope when they need it most," their mother added.

Kody Pretasky was born prematurely weighing 3 lbs. 3 oz. In just under three weeks, he went home from the NICU without any feeding or breathing tubes. That was enough to convince his parents, Kristin & Mark, that Kody was their little trooper & always would be.

However, at age 2½, Kody was presented with another challenge that would require attention the rest of his life—type 1 diabetes (T1D). When Kody was 3½ years old, CMN Hospitals helped fund an essential piece of equipment, an insulin pump. "The insulin pump has been a lifesaver! We are so grateful to CMN Hospitals for their constant support." Kody's mom exclaimed.

Empire takes the young artists' drawings & transforms them into greeting cards. All of the printing & materials is donated by Empire so that 100% profit from the sale of these Holiday & Hero Cards benefit the kids that need it the most—the children of CMN. Empire is putting its money where the miracles are.



Mya Berkowitch

Logan Kelm

Tannek Gilbertson

Eloya Gilbertson

Kody Pretasky

**Give Today.** Purchase Holiday & Hero Cards





## H&W, Slumber Number

~ Joyce Mlsna, Mayo Health System

The H&W Slumber Number Challenge will be coming in October/November, stay tuned for details.



### OVERVIEW

Sleep is essential for a person's overall health and well being, repairing the wear and tear that takes place throughout the day. However, many people don't get enough sleep..

- » Sleep refreshes: better mood and memory
- » Sleep boosts immunity to disease
- » It even helps you live longer

### QUICK FACT

According to Mayo Clinic, long-term lack of sleep increases the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart and cardiovascular disease.

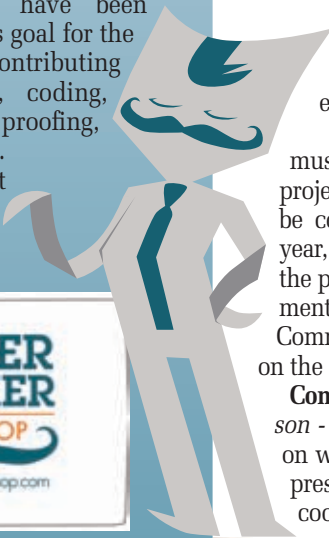
## Pending Launch for Mr. Sticker

~Empire Marketing Team

Empire has developed an eCommerce website, [misterstickerprintshop.com](http://misterstickerprintshop.com) to tap into a growing market of online print ordering.

Marketing team members have been diligently working towards this goal for the past year. Each team member contributing their strengths—web design, coding, photography, copy writing, proofing, research and problem solving...

Now we are at the point where we are dotting 'i's' and crossing 't's' and are hoping to launch soon.



## 'MPower'ing Sustainability at Empire ~ Cathy Buttell

At Empire, we know we need to create and produce sustainable methods for printing, but providing a safe environment for our employees and the community goes much deeper than that. It needs to be a mindset that every employee should embrace. To accomplish this, we have joined the 2015 MPower Champions Pilot Program in the Seven Rivers Region.

In 2009 the MPower program was created in the Madison Region, facilitated by Sustain Dane, a non-profit organization. Over 70 Madison-area businesses and organizations participated. With the success of the program, Sustain Dane felt the need to branch out to other communities. The Seven Rivers Region was chosen for their test pilot.

The pilot program was hosted by the Sustainability Institute at WTC, Empire was selected as one of the four pilot companies. The other groups are: Wal Mart (south side store), Habitat ReStore and HSR Associates (an architectural firm).

What is MPower? MPowerz is a year-long program, focusing on ways a business or organization can reduce their environmental impact. We meet every month for presentations and workshops on various subjects such as energy, recycling, transportation, water conservation, etc... We even took a tour of the La Crosse County Waste Facility (I definitely recommend touring it - it's an eye opener!).

In addition to meetings, our company must select and conduct 5 sustainability projects during the year. These projects can be completed by the end of the program year, or be "shovel-ready" (this means that the plans are in place, allowing us to implement the project in the future). The Green Committee and upper management agreed on the following projects:

**Compressor Heat Recovery** (Contact Person - Jay Yehle) This project is a case study on whether the heat generated by our compressors can be captured for heating in cooler months.

**Marketing Sustainability** (Contact Person - Jennifer Schloesser) This project will involve creating a marketing kit, highlighting our sustainability equipment, processes and achievements. It will be used for our sales team, as well as internal marketing and training.

**Capturing the Voice of the Employee** (Contact Person - Amy Bettis) The focus of this project is to capture the voice of employees by initiating a sustainability survey. We would like to measure what they consider important in regards to sustainability at work. With this information, we hope to improve employee engagement and drive the culture of change as it adheres to our Mission, Vision and Core Values.

**Garden and Landscaping** (Contact Person - Keith Cook) The goal of this project is to implement more naturalized spaces around the property in order to reduce the use of gas powered equipment associated with mowing, and reduce storm

water run-off.

**12-Color LED Press Conversion** (Contact Person - Russ Kuehn) We plan to convert our existing 6-color UV Conquest into a 12-color LED carousel press. By making this a project, we will be able to document and showcase the process for other companies who may be interested in sustainable printing methods.

Another aspect that we hope to achieve with some of these projects is employee involvement. If we can get our employees excited about what we're doing here, they will carry that momentum into their own homes and community. As stated previously, sustainability is something we hope to embrace company-wide, utilizing the knowledge and experience of all employees.

**If any Empire employee is interested in being a part of one of these projects or have any other ideas that can help reduce our environmental footprint, please get in touch with the project contact person or someone on the Green Committee.**

Green Committee members: Jennifer Schloesser, Amy Bettis, Cathy Buttell, Keith Cook, Jay Yehle, Amanda Henthorne, and Jeff Gierok



## End of Summer Ratatouille ~www.pgeveryday.com/food

The end of summer signals it's time to gather remaining vegetables for their last hurrah.

### Ingredients

1 medium eggplant, cut into ¼" slices  
1 medium zucchini, cut into ¼" slices  
1 yellow squash, cut into ¼" slices  
1 large. sweet onion, roughly chopped

2 lbs. tomatoes roughly chopped  
Add red pepper flakes, coarse salt & fresh ground pepper to taste  
Fresh Thyme & Rosemary, left on stems  
Olive oil

### Directions:

Rinse & chop/slice vegetables, keeping them all to a similar size. Combine all of the ingredients in your largest roasting pan. Go ahead and throw the herbs in whole. Add red pepper flakes, salt and pepper, drizzle with olive oil and toss to coat.

Cover the pan with foil and bake at 350 F for 45 minutes. Remove some of the juices from the bottom of the pan if you like your vegetables more browned. Remove the foil and bake for another 30-45 minutes until the vegetables are browned

For a healthy meal full of end-of-summer flavor serve up this simple dish, with pork or chicken – *leaving the herb stems in the pan, they've served their purpose.*



# What's Cooking?



# Employee SPOTLIGHT Up-cycling Memories ~Lisa Massoth



Kathy, SVS (left) & Lisa, Ink (right) display the Tshirt quilt.

The hidden talents of an employee...

Kathy Inglett is not only one of our great lead people in Cellavision, she is an incredibly crafty person. Kathy made the pictured quilt for my daughter Marissa (Lisa Massoth).

She up-cycled several Tshirts Marissa had

collected throughout high school in West Salem into this beautiful memory quilt. She stayed up late a couple of nights to get this gift done for my daughter. Kathy is involved and very helpful, I can't thank her enough!

Kathy's talents with a sewing machine are endless. If you can remember she made the Captain Kangaroo jacket for Terry Mc Clintock, when he retired from the Ink Dept. She also re-purposes old sweaters, most made from wool, into mittens. If you have any old sweaters, Kathy would be more than happy to take them off your hands—the sweaters not the mittens!

My parting thought for her, "Stay crafty, Kathy!"

## Employee Announcements

**Mark your calendars!**  
**Company Christmas Party**  
 Saturday, December 19, 2015  
 Stoney Creek Inn  
 5:00pm - Midnight

❖  
**Angie Meistad (Digital) & Jon Severson** were married on September 26, 2015. Best wishes to the happy couple!

❖  
**Congratulations Justin Peterson (Machine Shop) & Brooke Olson** On the birth of their daughter, Alayna Marie Peterson born on July 27, 2015

❖  
**Good Luck Renee Kotek** On your adventures in farming in Iowa. May your life be fruitful & happy. You will be missed.

❖  
**Our Condolences to Kathy Vaughan (SVS) & family** On the passing of her father Wendall Yeske on October 15, 2015. Wendall retired from Empire after many years as head of Maintenance/HVAC. His legacy lives on every day at Empire

❖  
**Empire National Sales Meeting July 19-21, 2016**  
 The date is set, pencil it in on your summer calendar!

## New Sales Record Reached ~Nick Patchen

What a great way to end to our fiscal year at Empire. On September 30, 2015 we hit the following sales records as a company.

Record number of jobs/parts shipped was **501!** This totalled out to

**\$340,133.76** in product shipped. Our normal daily average is approximately 150 jobs, give or take depending on the day. Our end total for the year was **\$24,575,353.82**. Keep up the good work and keep growing Empire!

## Employee Anniversaries

### OCTOBER

Lisa Slonka ..... 30 yrs.  
 Eileen Ustby..... 21 yrs.  
 Angela Gammons ... 10 yrs.  
 Laurie Arentz..... 10 yrs.  
 Charles Hills ..... 9 yrs.  
 Benjamin Bakken..... 5 yrs.  
 Sharon Erler..... 2 yrs.  
 Darcy Goldsmith..... 1 yr.  
 Shia Lee ..... 1 yr.  
 Kayla Olson ..... 1 yr.  
 Seth Walker..... 1 yr.  
 Dawn Kehr ..... 1 yr.  
 Joseph Roth..... 1 yr.  
 Dylan Ebersold ..... 1 yr.  
 Traci Low ..... 1 yr.

### NOVEMBER

Beth Roush..... 32 yrs.  
 Jim Weber..... 30 yrs.  
 Keith Cook ..... 24 yrs.  
 Roman Kamrowski... 21 yrs.  
 Dawn McGrath..... 21 yrs.

Jill Schultz ..... 18 yrs.  
 Marcia McFarlane... 18 yrs.  
 Candy Amann..... 15 yrs.  
 Morgan McDonah ... 13 yrs.  
 Theresa Baird..... 11 yrs.  
 Kevin Gerstenberger... 9 yrs.  
 Jon Schubert ..... 9 yrs.  
 Chris Kendhammer ... 8 yrs.  
 Rick Auterson ..... 7 yrs.  
 Bonita Anderson..... 6 yrs.  
 Janet Meyer ..... 5 yrs.  
 Dustin Maule ..... 3 yrs.  
 Mariya Selezneva ..... 1 yr.  
 Nicholas Patchen..... 1 yr.  
 Kristine Borger..... 1 yr.  
 Michael Baird ..... 1 yr.  
 Jeremy Riddle ..... 1 yr.  
 Lori Lemke..... 1 yr.  
 Sara Harding..... 1 yr.  
 Emily Gullickson..... 1 yr.  
 Jason Koopman..... 1 yr.  
 Brian Lor ..... 1 yr.

### DECEMBER

Kim Radke ..... 30 yrs.  
 John Johnson..... 30 yrs.  
 Kathy Vaughan ..... 27 yrs.  
 Dave Collins..... 21 yrs.  
 Steve J. Johnson ..... 20 yrs.  
 Rita Howe ..... 19 yrs.  
 Robert Karaffa ..... 16 yrs.  
 Steve Vinson ..... 16 yrs.  
 Eric Coleman ..... 11 yrs.  
 Kathy Inglett ..... 10 yrs.  
 Jay Yehle ..... 10 yrs.  
 Jackson Huus ..... 3 yrs.  
 Corey Stilwell..... 2 yrs.  
 Brittany Wise ..... 1 yr.  
 Ashley Karaffa ..... 1 yr.  
 Annie Wolfe..... 1 yr.  
 Dia Vang..... 1 yr.  
 Dawn Hoesley..... 1 yr.  
 Amanda Henthorne.... 1 yr.

\*Part-time employees

## Welcome New Employees!

Jefferey Kemp	Christine Riedel*	Nathan Rugg	Samantha Thompson
Shawn Kemp	John Severson	Jacob Deschaine	Cullyen Christen
Jesse Dwyer	Shawn Nash	Emily Courtney	
Brandon Eckert	Dewayne Rodgers		

Coordinators:..... Doug Billings, Amy Bettis	..... Jim Brush, Cindy Brush
Photographers: ..... Jennifer Schloesser	... Autum Jacobs, Troy Stockers, Marilyn Heinz
..... Amy Bettis, Kevin Gerstenberger	..... Mariya Selezneva, Lisa Massoth
..... Amanda Henthorne, Diane Simonson	..... Kathy Inglett, Cathy Buttell, Joyce Mlsna
..... Doug Billings, Rick Auterson	..... Jennifer Schloesser, Renee Kotek
Proofreaders: ..... Marilyn Heinz	..... Doug Billings John Friesmuth
Contributors: ..... Amanda Henthorne	..... Nick Patchen, Amy Bettis, Rena Cash

● **DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER: Dec. 28, 2015** ●

All articles and announcements can be submitted to: Doug Billings (2379) or Amy Bettis (2371)