



ABOVE & BEYOND | SPRING-SUMMER 2021



PARTNERS IN PRINTING

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- Fire Extinguisher Awareness

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- EMS Annual Report

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PARTNERS IN PRINTING BY: ELLEN KLUG

July 2021 marked the 6th Partners in Printing Expo, previously known as the National Sales Meeting. After having to postpone by a year due to COVID-19, we were finally able to gather together for a three-day event in La Crosse, WI. This year, Empire has partnered with PRINTING United Alliance to host this event.

..... DAY 1

PIP2021 kicked off on Tuesday, July 20, with the 3M Cup—a celebrity charity golf tournament that was held at Drugan's Castle Mound in Holmen, WI. The 18-hole scramble lasted a little over 4 hours and was capped off with lunch and an auction. Just over \$6,000 was raised and donated to the Children's Museum of La Crosse, WI.



(continued on page 8)



FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING BY: AMY BETTIS

The last thing you may think of while at work is, “Will I need a fire extinguisher today?” When you are operating equipment, do you know where the closest fire extinguisher is in case of fire? How many extinguishers are in your department? Do you point them out to new employees during orientation or when training? Do you remember to explain potential fire risk when using equipment with heating elements, such as a laminator?

In around 80% of fires, a portable extinguisher is enough to quickly and safely put it out. Ensuring proper fire extinguisher height and placement can be life-saving in many cases. This is why the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has created a standard for fire extinguishers.

The OSHA extinguisher standard dictates that employers should provide approved fire extinguishers and mount, locate, and identify them so that they are readily accessible to employees without subjecting the employees to possible injury. To prevent fire extinguishers from being moved or damaged, they should be mounted on brackets or in wall cabinets with the carrying handle placed 3.5 to 5 feet above the floor. Larger fire extinguishers need to be mounted at lower heights with the carrying handle about 3 feet from the floor. OSHA requires fire extinguishers to be at least four inches above the ground, meaning you cannot store them on the floor.

The potential type of fire that could occur dictates the required spacing and distance of extinguishers from employees. For Class A or D fires, travel distance for employees to any extinguisher must be 75 feet or less. For Class B fires, travel distance must be 50 feet or less. Empire’s extinguishers follow these guidelines.

Extinguishers must remain in their designated place unless being used. The employer must ensure they are fully charged, well maintained, and working properly. The extinguishers at Empire are inspected monthly. If discharged, extinguishers should be removed from the shop floor and sent to safety coordinator, Keith Cook, to be recharged and properly inspected before being returned to service.



SAFETY COMMITTEE

SAFETY COORDINATOR

Keith Cook.....R&D

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathy Vaughan.....Human Resources
 Amy Bettis.....Small Value Stream Supervisor
 Nancy Gilbertson.....Customer Service
 Curtis Johnson.....IT
 Tom Donaldson.....Digital Manager
 Theresa Antony.....Small Value Stream Operator
 Shane Hulburt.....Doming Supervisor
 Bob Fischer.....Digital Value Stream Operator

SUSTAINABILITY AT EMPIRE BY: CATHY BUTTELL

On April 20th, Empire received the 2021 Sustainable Business Recognition Award from PRINTING United Alliance (formally SGIA). This award recognizes our continued efforts to both maintain and create a sustainable business operation. Congratulations!

2021 Sustainable Business Recognition
Award Winners



Albert Basse Associates

Bolger Vision Beyond Print

ColorLogic

Echo Communications

Empire Screen Printing ★

Lawson Screen and Digital Products

LEM Products

MegaPrint

Night Owls

Ricoh USA

S-One Holdings Corporation

Stratojet USA

Surrey Digital Printing

T-One Print PTY Ltd

Vapor Apparel



SUSTAINABILITY
NEWS

On March 9, 2021 our EMS Annual Report for 2019-2020 was approved by the Wisconsin DNR. Jennifer Birkholz, the DNR’s Environmental Business Support Coordinator remarked, “Thank you for a well written and informative Green Tier annual report. Empire faced the challenges of 2020 head-on and has a good foundation for moving goals forward in the coming year.” This statement reflects everyone’s contribution to the sustainability achievements of Empire!



GREEN COMMITTEE

Jennifer Schloesser.....	Creative Director
Amy Bettis.....	Small Value Stream Supervisor
Cathy Buttell.....	Project Manager
Keith Cook.....	R&D
Jeff Gierok.....	Electrical Technician



FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING (CONT.)

Employees should *never* block a fire extinguisher with racks, carts, material pallets etc. You *always* want extinguishers to be visible and accessible at all times. Blocking the extinguisher for a little while isn't acceptable at any time, especially when it means a delay in our emergency response and an increased safety risk. Please be aware of your surroundings and avoid creating potential hazards.

SUSTAINABILITY AT EMPIRE (CONT.)

Now that we have successfully documented another year, it's time to get back to business with our objectives for the upcoming 2020-2021 year:

OBJECTIVE #1:

Reduce our annual landfill waste to 23.85% by 2022 (ongoing objective).

We are getting close to the end of this objective, which started in 2013. Currently, we are at 34.68% landfill waste. This year's action items will be 1) reducing waste from the Graphium and Flexo roll machines, and 2) begin to utilize the 2-color prototype roll-to-roll screen press in production, which will have minimal waste.

OBJECTIVE #2:

Implement sustainable print methods w/ equipment using UV LED technology.

We will continue with the design and creation of the UV LED Roll-to-Roll screen print presses. These presses have no comparative in the industry and no baseline. This will be established as we enter these presses into job production:

- The two-color UV LED roll-to-roll screen print prototype press will be entered into full production and begin printing jobs. This will help to set a baseline for material.
- Build a two-color UV LED roll-to-roll screen print press.
- Build a four-color UV LED roll-to-roll screen print press.

OBJECTIVE #3:

Implement sustainable equipment used in manufacturing process.

When the automatic screen-washing unit was installed in June 2020, the intent to have two-thirds of the processes using recycled water did not work. There wasn't a viable way to remove the solids from the water to make it clean enough. We will research different reclaiming attachments to be used with the automatic screen-washing unit to achieve a system that can clean the water enough to be re-used on screens and reduce our water/tons usage by 25-50 percent.

OBJECTIVE #4:

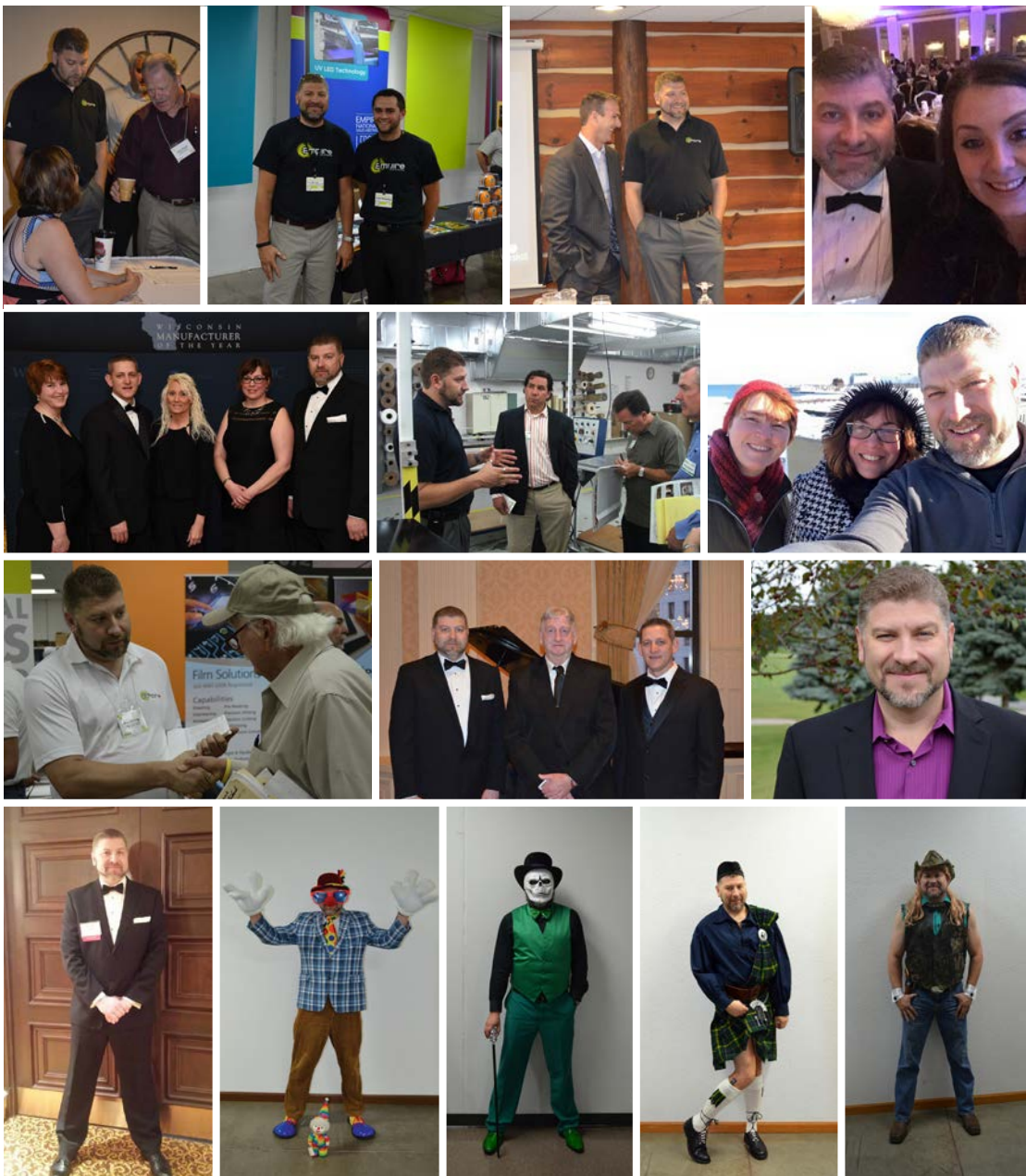
Make improvements based on our 2019 external audit.

Empire will reevaluate and rate the aspects and impact resolutions based on the new scoring system as well as updating all documentation. It will be a collaborative effort between the Green Committee and departmental supervisors. This is a continuing objective due to setbacks in 2020 with our COVID policies that were implemented. The deadline for this objective will be extended to 2022 fiscal year.

BEST OF LUCK DOUG BILLINGS BY: JOHN FREISMUTH

As Empire bids farewell to Doug Billings, it is my pleasure to acknowledge how my friend has grown. During our 19 years working together, Doug has supported me to help create a vision which includes improving yourself. Doug's support also reaches a more personal level. During a time when I was struggling to sleep, Doug and I were on the road together a lot. When I got home my wife asked if I kept Doug up all night. I told her I slept like a baby because, "Doug makes me feel safe." All joking aside, I enjoyed our time spent together and will miss traveling with him.

Doug is now onto his next chapter to take over the leadership role in a 60-year-old local company. I watched Doug take a vision of making the print industry better for future generations and build it through the Partners in Printing Expo. Doug expanded our national sales meeting and elevated it to include a show which has changed how our industry does business. It is this passion that makes me confident Doug will be successful making a similar impact in his new career path.





EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY BY: ELLEN KLUG

Employee Appreciation Day was on Friday, March 5 this year, and Empire supplied donuts for all employees. On top of this, employees were given the opportunity to nominate one coworker that they appreciate and their reasons why. The people with the most nominations were lucky winners. The winners are as follows:

Two people tied for third, receiving 3 votes a piece. These individuals each received \$50 gift cards:

- Randy Lemke (Hardtooling)
- Cody Volden (Small Value Stream)

Four people tied for second receiving 4 votes a piece. These individuals each received \$100 gift cards:

- Vanessa Fox (Order Processing/Account Manager)
- Ralph Young (2nd Shift Production Manager)
- Jim Weber (Stockcutting)
- Chase Penkalski (Large Value Stream)

The person with the most votes receiving 6 total votes from their coworkers and winner of \$100 cash is:

- Robert Bialecki (Digital)

MARCH MADNESS BY: ELLEN KLUG



Our 2021 March Madness winners are:

1st Place



Shane Hulburt

2nd Place



Matt Vanderloop

3rd Place



Nancy Gilbertson

FOOD DRIVE BY: ELLEN KLUG

Since 2011, employees at Empire have been giving back to the community through a cook-off—sometimes soup, sometimes chili, sometimes both. Each year, the cook-off occurs and all proceeds are donated to a local organization. Empire matches up to \$1,500 in addition to the donations that were raised by employees. Organizations we have donated to in the past include: La Crosse Promise, Family and Children's Center, 7 Rivers Robotics Coalition, and GROW La Crosse, just to name a few.

This year, we switched things up due to COVID-19. Instead of a cook-off, we held a company-wide food drive! The food drive consisted of friendly competition between five different employee teams who had three weeks to gather as many food items, need products, gift cards, and cash as possible. The top three donors, regardless of what group they were in, won cash prizes. At the end of the three-week period, the team with the highest monetary value raised won a pizza party! Also, each employee that brought in an item was eligible for raffle prizes, meaning each day an employee brought in an item to donate, they received more chances to win the raffle prize. All proceeds raised from this event were donated to The Hunger Taskforce of La Crosse.

Thank you to all employees who participated in this year's Food Drive and, thank you to Empire for their additional donation!

EMPLOYEES RAISED
\$3,640.58

EMPIRE DONATED
\$1,500.00

TOTAL MONEY RAISED
\$5,140.58

WINNING TEAM DEPARTMENTS:

Front Office
HR
Accounting
IT
Art
Customer Service
Tele-sales

THE TOP THREE DONATORS

Jared Ball
Nancy Gilbertson
Debbie Michel

RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS

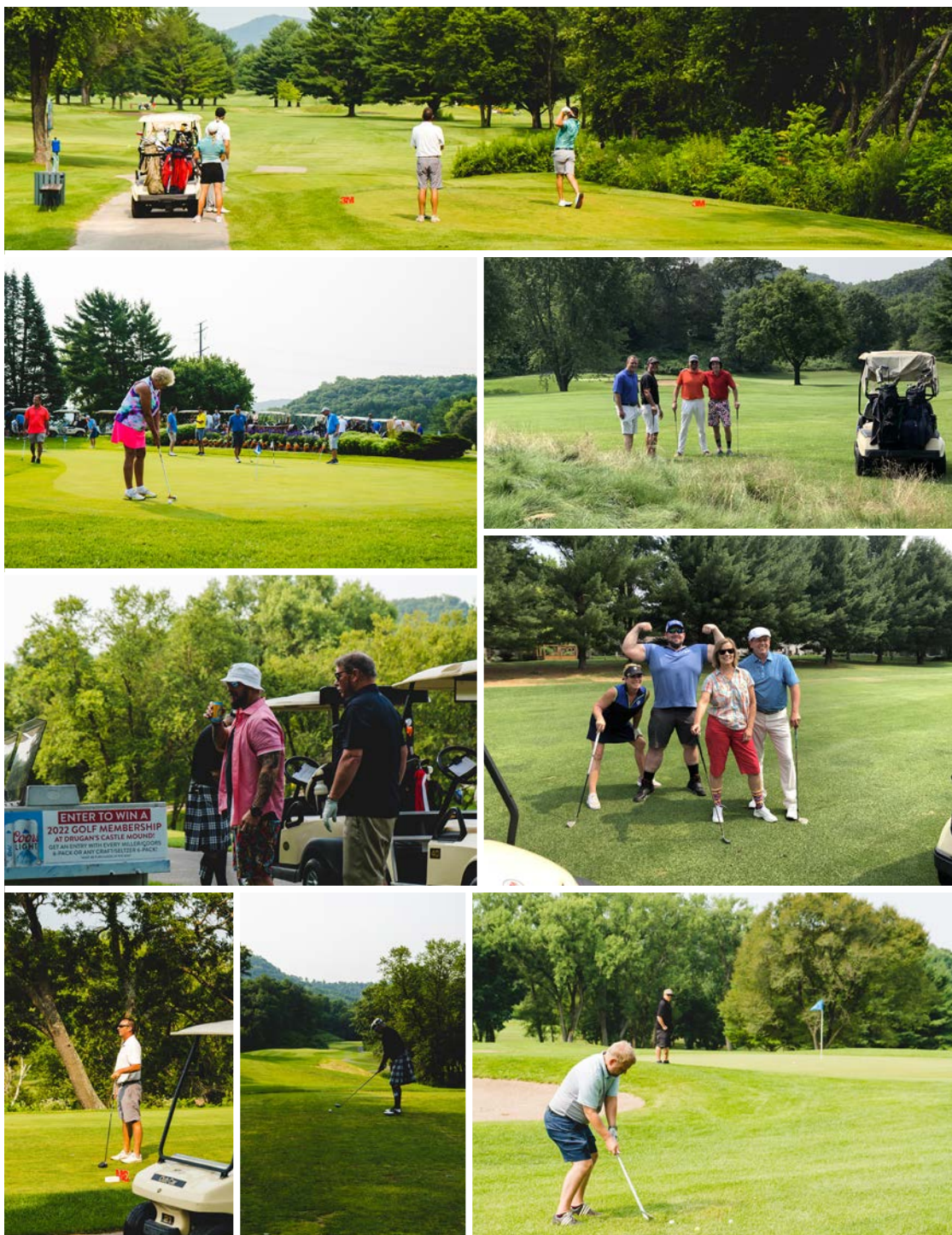
Becky Stark
Amy Bettis
Diane Simonson
Christine Granum
Kiecla Frutel



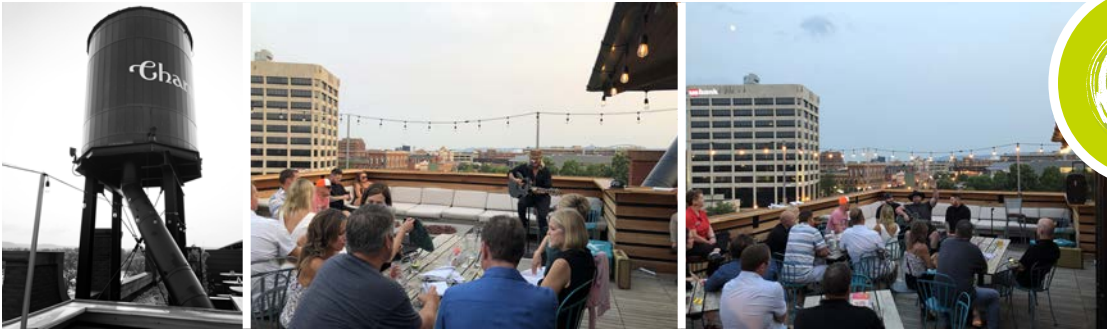
PARTNERS IN PRINTING (CONT.)

Returning celebrities for the Charity Golf Tournament included Jared Blake, Jared Weeks, Ira Dean, and Bigg Vinny. Musicians Juju Rossi and Butter, along with former Green Bay Packers Frank Winters and Chris Jackie, got to experience their first Partners in Printing event.

Along with the scramble, there were two hole-in-one opportunities on the course. The hole-in-one prizes consisted of a new car and \$10,000, but unfortunately, nobody claimed either of those prizes. There were also competitions for longest drive, closest to the pin, and longest putt for both men and women.



Following the golf event was a private party on the rooftop of The Charmant Hotel. Guests enjoyed drinks and food while Ira Dean played an acoustic set. After Ira's set, fellow musicians Jared Weeks, Bigg Vinny, Butter, and Jared Blake joined in for an evening of more music and laughter.



.....DAY 2.....

Wednesday was our Professional Learning day at the Radisson Hotel Conference Center in downtown La Crosse, WI. Throughout the day, five different speakers took the stage touching on a variety of topics. Our speakers were:

FRANK WINTERS

Green Bay Packers

My Path to Becoming a World Champion



TOM THIBODEAU

Master of Arts in Servant Leadership

The Positive Power of Servant Leadership



TRACY SPEARS

Exceptional Leaders Lab

Developing your Personal and Professional Brand



GENE MARKS

The Marks Group PC

Political, Economic, and Tech Trends That Will Affect Your Business in the Next Three Years



BRIAN PARSLEY

Business Intelligence Strategist

What Are You Really Saying to Your Customers?





After the Professional Learning day, Empire's president, John Freismuth, hosted a backyard BBQ at his home. The BBQ was a great opportunity to relax and network with others while enjoying a beautiful day. Food from Big Boar BBQ, wine from Lost Island Wine, and beer from Fountain City Brewing were available to all in attendance.



..... DAY 3

Thursday was the busiest day of all, starting with the Partners in Printing Expo. Hosted at the La Crosse Center, we had more than 80 vendors from all around the globe showing the latest in the printing industry, such as materials, presses, and technology. The Expo was open to the public from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

While the Expo was going on in La Crosse, Empire was hosting company tours in Onalaska. People were able to register for a tour time upon registering for the event. Tours were hosted by a variety of supervisors and members of upper management.



After the expo was the first show in the Tattoos & Tailgates Concert Series. This show highlighted and shared the rich printing heritage in the Coulee Region while providing nationally recognized entertainment for the public. Held at the Oktoberfest Grounds in downtown La Crosse, the show consisted of the following musicians/bands: Juju Rossi, The Trailer Choir (Bigg Vinny and Butter), The Nashville Cartel (Jared Blake, Jared Weeks, and Bigg Vinny), Saliva, and Tyler Farr. The whole event was emceed by *NSYNC's Chris Kirkpatrick.



EMPIRE SCREEN PRINTING



Special thanks to Bailey Nelson of BVision Media (videographer) and Reese Godoy of Reese Godoy Productions (photography) for capturing parts of the events.



ANNIVERSARIES

FEBRUARY

John Freismuth.....29 years
Shane Hulburt.....27 years
Guy Gregerson.....25 years
Jason Harnisch.....20 years
Angie Severson.....17 years
Stacie Boisen.....14 years
Dan Poff.....12 years
Georgina Cundy-Lalande.....3 years
Jonathan Alequin.....1 year
Heather Reinsvold.....1 year

MARCH

Jim Schweinfus.....50 years
Clark Martin.....32 years
Sherri Vinson.....28 years
Jeff Gierok.....28 years
Dan Metz.....28 years
Jessica Kamrowski.....25 years
Petra Vogel.....24 years
Vanessa Fox.....20 years
Andy Kiedrowski.....15 years
Alexis Marsh.....7 years
Walter Staff.....6 years
Chad Hoesley.....6 years
Cass Rehfuess.....4 years
Crystal Monn.....2 years
Alexander Taylor.....2 years
Brittany Cairns.....1 year
Amy McCurdy.....1 year
Jared Ball.....1 year
Scott Deml.....1 year

APRIL

Troy Stockers.....31 years
Kevin Mason.....29 years
Randy Lemke.....29 years
Jenny Ledman.....28 years
Bill Feyen.....23 years
Mark Klinski.....16 years
Amy Bettis.....16 years
Rhonda Peterson.....14 years
Becky Wurzel.....11 years
Teri Herold.....11 years

Curt Johnson.....11 years
Anthony McDowell.....11 years
Chyanne Klotz.....7 years
James Owsley.....4 years
Patty Wells.....2 years
Jory Stall.....2 years
Greg Peterson.....2 years
Paula Price.....2 years

MAY

Lori Taube.....42 years
Travis Brush.....31 years
Lisa Massoth.....31 years
Sam Sokolik.....28 years
Sheldon True.....24 years
Tom Donaldson.....24 years
Deb Gilbertson.....24 years
Katie Schaller.....16 years
Autum Jacobs.....13 years
Brian Hundt.....11 years
Chase Penkalski.....11 years
Brian Subjek.....9 years
Jacky Vue.....8 years
Kiecila Fruetel.....7 years
Evelyn Mihalovic.....5 years
Cory Krajewski.....5 years
Brenda Hansen.....4 years
Diana Kurtz.....3 years
Megan Dickerson-Caacobay.....3 years
Amie Miller.....3 years

JUNE

Dawn Gorniak.....37 years
Debbie Michel.....36 years
Russ Kuehn.....26 years
Becky Stark.....25 years
Sheila Albers.....22 years
Bob Fischer.....19 years
Matt Vanderloop.....17 years
Carina Olson.....25 years
Sarah Erickson.....14 years
Rebecca Burg.....10 years
Codi Jacobs.....9 years
Kaylynn McDowell.....6 years

Britney Henkel.....6 years
Ron Tilson.....5 years
Charles Beck.....5 years
Audra Moline.....5 years
Brad Ames.....4 years
Jordan Bott.....3 years
Ashleigh Kidd.....3 years

JULY

Steve Remen.....49 years
Ralph Young.....30 years
Deb Gorniak.....27 years
Laramie Schwier.....27 years
Joann Anderson.....24 years
Curt Wier.....22 years
Teresa Sullivan.....22 years
Rob Kranski.....11 years
Josh Leisgang.....9 years
Moly Yang.....7 years
Jarrod Olson.....6 years
Zach Johnson.....5 years
McKenzie Adank.....5 years
Ethan Walker.....4 years

NEW EMPLOYEES

Jacob Kane	Misty Merritt
Sam Manley	Jordan Witt
Andrea Bell	Tristan Kavanaugh
Cole Schultz	Robert Sanders
Stacey Bartels	Raven Erickson
Evan Heintz	Bradley Cook
Lori Repinski	Brian Powers
Daniel Puente	Hannah Hulburt
Sharon Ronnie	Davial Winchel
Alyson Olson	David Hulburt
Ethan Anderson	Tanya Thompson
Deondre Winchel	
Kimberly Kazianka	
Lakota Standingbear	
Courtney Johnson	
Brandon Dougherty	
Katrina Beesecker Pierce	
Nicholas Lubinsky	

Deadline for the next
newsletter: 10/29/2021



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