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BizTimes *manufacturing* weekly

Produced by **BizTimes** **CEO STRATEGI**

Monday, April 13, 2009

Poblocki completes first round of sign installations at Trump Tower

4.29.2009

7:30-9:30A.

\$65/per person
\$520/corp. table of 1

West Allis-based Poblocki Sign Co. recently completed the first round of installation of interior signage at the Trump International Hotel & Tower in downtown Chicago.



The company's crews have installed all of the signs, built at the company's headquarters and manufacturing facility in West

Allis, on the first 50 floors of the tower. They will return to Chicago later this summer to install signs on the remaining 42 floors still under construction.

Poblocki will install the tower's external signs as well.

Once Trump Tower is completed this summer, Poblocki will have fabricated and installed more than 3,000 signs in the building.

Poblocki won a contract to build signs for the first phase of the new tower after direct negotiations with Donald Trump, who is personally overseeing the most critical aspects of the project.

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"This is one of the most well-known building projects in the Midwest, and Poblocki understands that high-quality signage is a priority," said Paul Poblocki, vice president and general manager of Poblocki Sign Co. "We have a fantastic team of project managers and fabricators who worked on this project and produced signage for Mr. Trump and his guests that is visually appealing and fabricated to the highest standards."

Poblocki has designed, built and installed some of the largest and most visible signs in the Milwaukee and Chicago areas, including Miller Park, Soldier Field, Northwestern Mutual and the Harley-Davidson Museum.

For more, visit www.poblocki.com.



Wisconsin Manufacturing News

GE Healthcare to cut 179 jobs in Milwaukee

GE Healthcare informed the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Thursday it will eliminate 179 jobs later this year at its plant at 8200 W. Tower Ave. on Milwaukee's northwest side.

The medical systems and bioscience division of General Electric Co. will continue to employ about 725 people at the manufacturing site.

The company said the layoffs will begin June 9 and continue through Dec. 31.

Ball Corp. to close Watertown plant

Broomfield, Colo.-based Ball Corp. announced last week that it will close its Ball Plastics Packaging Division plant in Watertown by June, eliminating 46 jobs.

The plant is located at 401 Dayton St. The company said it will provide the employees full pay and benefits for 60 days after the layoffs.

Broomfield, Colo.-based Ball Corp. also said it will close its plant in Baldwinsville, N.Y. The work from the closed plants will be shifted to some of the company's other plants.

The company will incur a charge of \$14 million with the closings, but expects annual savings of \$12 million, beginning in 2010.

"Consolidating production capacity into larger, more efficient plants is necessary to better balance our supply with market demand and to improve the performance of our plastic packaging business."

Paper facility in Cedarburg to shutter

International Paper Company said it will close its plant in Cedarburg at N143 W6048 Pioneer Road. The closing is expected to take place between June 2 and June 16. A total of 117 International Paper employees will lose their jobs.

Rockwell shares climb amid acquisition speculation

Rockwell Automation Inc. (ROK) stock shares soared last week amid speculation that the Milwaukee-based company may be acquired.

Several Internet message boards speculated that Rockwell had received an offer of \$32 per share from St. Louis, Mo.-based Emerson Electric Co., a global manufacturer in the controls, electronics and process management sector.

Rockwell spokesman John Bernaden said he would not confirm or deny that the company had received a buyout offer.

"We do not comment on rumors, especially regarding the potential actions or intent of other companies," he said. "We believe that the highest value for Rockwell Automation shareholders will be realized by Rockwell Automation remaining an independent company and executing our growth and performance strategy."

Rockwell also declared a quarterly dividend of 29 cents per share, payable on June 10. The company's previous dividend was also 29 cents.

Some of Rockwell's recent actions could be taken as indicators that the company is preparing itself for sale.

In early March, Rockwell announced cutbacks in its global workforce. The company closed one of its manufacturing facilities in Ontario, Canada. On April 1, Rockwell chairman and chief executive officer Keith Nosbusch asked the company's employees to take three unpaid days off per quarter. The company suspended its retirement account contributions in the United States and told employees there will be no bonuses this year. Nosbusch said his own salary will be cut by 20 percent.

Like many global manufacturers, Rockwell has been stung by the current recession. In early February, the company reported \$1.18 billion in first quarter 2009 earnings, an 11-percent decline from the first quarter of 2008. The company's fiscal first quarter net income was 81 cents per share, down from \$1.04 per share in the first quarter of 2008.

"We expect the market environment in 2009 to be very difficult," Nosbusch said at the time. "The global recession has grown deeper and wider than we originally anticipated. Key economic indicators and projections continue to weaken and we are seeing a significant deceleration in customer demand."

Cleaver-Brooks opens new plant in China

Cleaver-Brooks, a Milwaukee-based manufacturer of boilers and boiler room equipment, has opened a new assembly plant in Shenzhen, China.

The new facility will enable Cleaver-Brooks' product group, C-B Package Boiler, to expand its sales in the Chinese market by offering environmentally-friendly boiler technologies.

Effective immediately Cleaver-Brooks Boilers (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd. will be offering the Model 4WI, firetube boiler, which is designed for industrial applications.

"This new facility presents a great opportunity for C-B Package Boiler to share our advanced technologies in a country that is beginning to address an array of environmental issues," said Earle Pfefferkorn, president of C-B Package Boiler. "Our eco-friendly boilers will help Chinese manufacturers reduce emissions, helping to decrease air pollution, while promoting energy efficiency. We are extremely excited about the Chinese market and the opportunities for this

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BizTimes provides news and operational insight to the owners, presidents and other top executives of closely held businesses in southeastern Wisconsin, including Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington, Racine, Kenosha, Walworth and Sheboygan counties.

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new venture."

Cleaver-Brooks has been selling boilers in China since the early 1980s through its global distribution network. The new location will operate from an 8,500-square-foot facility which will enable Cleaver-Brooks to offer its customers a more competitively priced product with reduced lead times.

Made in Milwaukee

Every spring, Wisconsin gardeners begin their annual rites of passage – planting, pruning, fertilizing and getting ready for a summer of outdoor work.

And a large number of them are probably using products made by Unco Industries Inc., a Racine-based manufacturer. Unco's two lines of products are for completely different markets, but they are intrinsically linked.

The Racine company raises cultured nightcrawlers from their egg stage to adulthood, producing a line of worms marketed as Tasty Bait Nightcrawlers. The line of worms has given the company steady growth over the years, but is not the main revenue generator at Unco.

Worm castings (an industry term for the worm's waste product) is one of the most prized organic fertilizers and is giving Unco big sales and revenue increases, said Tom Chapman, president and founder of the company.

To read more, click [here](#).

Dispatches from China

To get into a U.S. college or university, Chinese students are required to take an English language test, either ILTS or TOEFL. SATs are not required for undergraduate studies, but GMATs and LSATs are required for graduate programs.

Taking the tests is an ordeal in itself; \$600 and hundreds of hours are spent in cram programs prepping for the test.

Next in line are the testing companies that charge \$150 for the test.

Some American colleges and universities also will require that a validation service be used to verify the information submitted at a cost \$175 to \$300. Then the wait begins as applications percolate through the system.

To read more, click [here](#).

Manufacturing People in the News

Harley tabs Johnson Controls executive to be next CEO

Milwaukee-based Harley-Davidson Inc. has named Keith Wandell president and chief executive officer, succeeding James Ziemer, who is retiring. Wandell, 59, currently serves as president and chief operating officer of Glendale-based Johnson Controls Inc., a \$38 billion global company.

Wandell, a 21-year Johnson Controls veteran, will start his new duties at Harley-Davidson May 1.

"Keith Wandell is a seasoned global business leader who brings tremendous energy, passion, and organizational and talent development capability to his job as Harley-Davidson's new chief executive," said Harley-Davidson board member Barry Allen, who serves as the board's presiding director. "His vision and values make him a great fit, and he is absolutely the right person to now lead Harley-Davidson on its exciting journey."

Regarding his appointment, Wandell said, "Harley-Davidson has a remarkable record of success and limitless possibilities. I am honored and thrilled to join the Harley-Davidson family and to

have this opportunity to help it fulfill dreams, create innovative market-leading products, and expand its opportunities worldwide."

Harley also announced the following organizational leadership changes which, according to Allen, also will serve as a catalyst to drive Harley-Davidson's strategies for growth, operational excellence and leadership development going forward:

Matthew Levatich becomes president and chief operating officer of Harley-Davidson Motor Company. Levatich, 44, is currently president and managing director of MV Agusta, the Italian motorcycle maker that Harley-Davidson Inc. acquired last August.

In addition, James McCaslin moves to executive vice president for corporate product planning for Harley-Davidson, reporting to the CEO. In this newly created position, McCaslin has broad oversight of motorcycle product planning and development processes across the company. McCaslin, 60, has served as president of the company for the past eight years.

Enrico D'Onofrio, 51, assumes the post of managing director of MV Agusta. D'Onofrio joined MV Agusta as corporate general director earlier in 2009, overseeing all administrative functions, including finance and human resources. Previously he held senior management positions at motorcycle maker Ducati, including CFO, and at Proctor & Gamble in Europe.

All three appointments also are effective May 1.

"On behalf of the entire board of directors, I also want to thank Jim Ziemer for his 40 years of service to Harley-Davidson and wish him well on his upcoming retirement. All of us who have worked with Jim throughout the years have benefited from his leadership, his selfless commitment to the company, and his contributions to making the brand one of the most admired and successful brands in the world," Allen said.

More Manufacturing News

Obama rushes order for 17,600 new cars from Detroit

President Barack Obama announced recently that the General Services Administration (GSA) will accelerate its purchase of new cars for the government fleet by investing funds from the federal stimulus package to buy about 17,600 new, fuel-efficient vehicles produced by American auto companies by June 1.

By purchasing fuel efficient vehicles from American automakers over the next two months, this move will help stimulate the economy, support the auto industry, and achieve energy-efficiency goals, Obama said.

The GSA will spend \$285 million of stimulus to purchase the vehicles, which will be made from manufacturers with an existing contract with the GSA, which are General Motors Corp., Chrysler LLC and Ford Motor Co.

The government's order includes the purchase of 2,500 hybrid sedans that will be ordered by April 15. This is the largest one-time purchase of hybrid vehicles for the federal government fleet in history.

By swapping out less efficient federal vehicles for new hybrid and fuel-efficient ones, the government will reduce its gasoline consumption by 1.3 million gallons per year and prevent 26 million pounds of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere, the administration said.

The GSA will also dedicate \$15 million to pilot advanced technology vehicles in the GSA Fleet. Pilot programs will focus on commercially available compressed natural gas and hybrid buses, and all-electric vehicles. Those orders will be placed by September 30, 2009.

"The problems that caused this economic crisis weren't created in a day, and it will take time and hard work to get our economy back on track. But I am 100 percent committed to a strong

American auto industry, and we will stand with America's auto workers and their families during these difficult times," Obama said. "As a part of our commitment to the American auto industry, I charged my administration with using Recovery Act funds to purchase a new fleet of fuel efficient government vehicles to increase demand for our American auto companies and stimulate the economy. I am pleased to announce today that my team has moved swiftly to accelerate this purchase and give our American auto industry and our economy a boost. This is only a first step, but I will continue to ensure that we are working to support the American auto industry during this difficult period of restructuring."

Coakley expands with new center in Sun Prairie

Milwaukee-based Coakley Brothers Co. has opened a new operations center in Sun Prairie to serve the greater Madison area.

The building, specifically designed for housing the company's inventory of product for receiving and distribution, is located in the Sun Prairie Industrial Park.

The 87,000-square-foot facility is racked for high bay and lay-down product storage for receiving and distribution, affords modern security and fire protection standards and has technically advanced inventory management system capabilities.

Coakley provides facility project management, including corporate relocation, systems furniture installation, furniture design, inventory project management and warehousing and distribution services

"This new facility demonstrates our commitment to bring the highest quality services and solutions to organizations in the region as we help them better manage their inventory of product that we service inside our corporate clients facilities and warehouse off-site," said Peggy Coakley, chief executive officer and owner of Coakley Brothers.

Standard Process awards \$10,000 in student scholarships

Standard Process Inc., a Palmyra-based manufacturer of nutritional whole food supplements, recently awarded \$10,000 in student scholarships at the 2009 National Chiropractic Legislative Conference (NCLC).

The scholarships were given to students at Northwest Health Science University, Southern California University of Health Sciences, and National College of Chiropractic.

Oshkosh Corp. sponsors high school students in national robotic competition

Oshkosh Corp. will sponsor a team of talented local high school students who won their local and regional events to advance to the finals in an international robotics competition April 16-18 in Atlanta. High school students from Oshkosh West, Oshkosh North and Oshkosh Lourdes, along with Winneconne and Omro high schools, will showcase their specially-designed robot in the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) International Robotics Competition. Eight engineers from Oshkosh also serve as mentors for the students.

Oshkosh area high school students have been involved in engineering mentoring programs sponsored by Oshkosh Corporation for more than 15 years.

Calendar

MMAC forum to focus on 'card check' law

The Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce's next Blueprint Briefing will focus on the

potential impacts of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), also known as the "card check" law.

The bill has been introduced in the both the U.S. House and Senate (HR 1409 and S. 560).

This bill would affect businesses in all industries by radically restructuring 60 years of carefully crafted labor laws that have served both unions and employers well for decades. The bill would allow unions to simply collect signatures and deny employees their right to a secret ballot election process, the MMAC said. The bill also would undermine the collective bargaining process through forced binding arbitration and would imposing substantial new penalties on employers, the MMAC said.

The Blueprint Briefing will take place on Thursday, April 23, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the MMAC's offices in downtown Milwaukee at 756 N. Milwaukee St. At this briefing, Jon Levine of Michael Best & Friedrich LLP will provide a detailed overview of the EFCA legislation and its impacts, and Scott Reppert, president and chief executive officer of Superior Health Linens, will discuss steps to make a business more worker-friendly and less susceptible to unionization efforts.

To register, visit www.mmac.org/calendar.

Manufacturing Resources

Manufacturer Associations

- [Association of Equipment Manufacturers](#)
- [National Fluid Power Association](#)
- [Polyurethane Manufacturers Association](#)
- [Society of Manufacturing Engineers - Chapter 4](#)
- [Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Biotechnology and Medical Device Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Sign Association](#)
- [Wisconsin Electrical Machines and Power Electronics Consortium](#)
- [Water Quality Association of Wisconsin](#)

Manufacturing Advocacy, Leadership Training and Continuing Education

- [The Paranet Group](#)
- [Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#)
- [MSOE's Business Excellence Consortium](#)
- [Center for Quick Response Manufacturing \(QRM\) at the University of Wisconsin](#)

Other resources

- [American Society for Quality](#)
- [Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce](#)
- [Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Commerce](#)
- [Milwaukee Export Assistance Center - U.S. Commercial Service](#)
- [MSOE's Applied Technology Center](#)
- [MSOE's Rapid Prototyping Center](#)
- [MATC's Energy Conservation and Advanced Manufacturing \(ECAM\) facility](#)

This exclusive news bulletin is compiled by BizTimes reporter Eric Decker. Send manufacturing news and tips to eric.decker@biztimes.com

