

Fall Issue 2016

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Hello CMMA,

What do you call six manufacturing companies with their doors proudly wide open to the public, a driven and hardworking event leadership team, and parking lots filled with people young and old being informed and inspired? At CMMA, we call that the 2016 Tour of Manufacturing and better yet, we call it meaningful promotion of industry!



The two day event by the numbers: 665 community members, 300 parents, 300 students, 93 job seekers, and 165 “unidentified.” A grand total of 1,522 visits were recorded; hundreds of participants benefitting from real world exposure to modern manufacturing in central Minnesota. Attendees witnessed world class production equipment, technology, and automation along with the region’s highly skilled workforce creating products and components that are in demand worldwide.

Community members now know what goes on in “those big buildings” in their town, students caught a glimpse of many challenging and rewarding training and career pathways, and parents realized that manufacturing is a credible and prosperous occupation that does not always require a four year degree. For those making an effort to take advantage of this unique event, the notion of manufacturing as dark, dirty and dangerous has been further dispelled. Job seekers learned about the many current openings that our manufacturers have and more about the skills they need to be successful on the job.

Let me share some participant feedback from the event that I find to be both confirmation and validation of our effort:

- I had no idea that we had so much extraordinary manufacturing going on in the St Cloud area.
- Our tour was fabulous! We were all amazed! ALL employees were super welcoming, the tour was very thorough and we learned so much!! Going into this, I really had no idea of the caliber of this company and the incredible products they are putting on the road. My son and daughter both commented after we left about how impressed they were as well - and both said they want to work there when they grow up.
- Very enlightening--it is good to know what our community has to offer in terms of employment opportunities. Feel I’m better able to promote our community when meeting people from and/or in different parts of the state, region, and country.
- I loved how all the manufacturers tied the job back into education. This was useful information since I had my 2 teenagers with me who are trying to figure out what type of careers to pursue.

Continued on page 4

Upcoming Events

October 27

CMMA General Meeting

Princeton

Tour: Crystal Cabinet Works & CCW Training Center

November 17

CMMA General Meeting

Foley

Tour: Blow Molded Specialties

December 8

CMMA Holiday Social

St. Cloud

January 26

CMMA General Meeting

St. Cloud

Tour: Central McGowan

Featured Member: Riteway Conveyors, Inc.

RiteWay Conveyors, Inc. was founded in 1999 and began as an installer of conveyor systems for one major vendor in the package handling industry. Today RiteWay Conveyors, Inc. is a leading provider of quality turn-key services from design, manufacturing, and installation to dismantling, repair, maintenance, and refurbishing of conveyor material handling equipment and systems. From small, local companies to Fortune 500 businesses, their extensive industry experience makes RiteWay a preferred manufacturing partner to create all types of custom material handling solutions.



The story of RiteWay is a comeback story; a story that demanded perseverance and guts from its current owner and president, Denise Johnson.

Bob Green, RiteWay's founder and Johnson's dad, started out in business as so many small manufacturing companies have, in the back of a garage or in this case a Quonset hut. He was inventive and creative, with little or no formal training, only experience gained from various jobs. He saw a need and began installing good-as-new, refurbished conveyor equipment for a subsidiary of FedEx.

As his business grew, in 2003 he purchased the current facility in Lester Prairie which consisted of 24,500 sq ft of manufacturing and storage space, and he persuaded his daughter to join him at RiteWay Manufacturing. The father/daughter partnership, from all accounts, was an exceptional one combining their strengths and capabilities.

Financial struggles began in 2008 when RiteWay built a \$1.8 million, 24,000 square foot addition in answer to a \$30 million contract that would have expanded their business, doubled the company's annual revenue, and stabilized their customer base. They had barely moved into the expanded location when the contract fell through due to the turbulence of the economy at that time. It was devastating.

In January 2010 Green suffered a relapse of bladder cancer originally diagnosed in 2003. He died in October.

In November 2010 RiteWay received an order for receivership against the company and within a few weeks Johnson filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. This was eventually denied, RiteWay appealed, and eventually it was denied again.

It took two years of determined effort, trying to outrun receivership, looking at every possible revenue stream, trying to find investors, waiting for the economy to rebound - and giving it to the Lord - before Johnson found the help she needed at Heritage Bank in Willmar which helped find loan guarantees from the USDA, SBA and the Southwest Initiative Fund in Hutchinson. It was enough to satisfy the previous debt and begin again.



On October 8, 2012, Denise Johnson secured the purchase of RiteWay Manufacturing, Inc. and is now the Owner and President.

On July 28, 2015, they announced their name change from RiteWay Manufacturing to RiteWay Conveyors, Inc. to more accurately reflect what they do. Why RiteWay? Because Bob Green believed things should be built the "RiteWay."

The number of employees at RiteWay Conveyors has grown since 2012 as has annual revenue, beyond projections. It should be noted that RiteWay did not lay off a single person over those tumultuous years. At their annual company meeting last April, RiteWay employees ventured out to a customer's facility. Such field trips allow employees to see the equipment they manufacture and how it works in operation; not only does it help to understand the finished product it also builds loyalty – loyalty fought and paid for by Denise Johnson.

Excerpts taken from Enterprise Minnesota Magazine, November 2013.

Written by Steph Davis, Executive Assistant

Welcome New Members!

Bayer Truck & Equipment, Inc.

Bekkala Engineering, LLC

Bremer Bank

Jacobs Financial

Master Mark Plastics

Meadowbrook Insurance

The Bank of Elk River

The Tool House

Volunteer Bio

Nathan Brown



Where do you work, what do you do? I am the Sales and Client Services Manager for American Door Works and Mid Central Door. I am responsible for developing and implementing sales and customer service strategy to ensure company growth and client retention. Between Mid Central Door and American Door Works, we sell, install, service and perform Preventative Maintenance on all types of commercial doors and residential garage doors.

What was your first job? I had several PT jobs growing up, but my first FT job was working 12 hours shifts at Hutchinson Technology (HTI) in my hometown during the summers and Holidays of my college years. It gave me an appreciation for manufacturing and the work that is performed in a production setting.

Hometown: I grew up in Hutchinson, but have lived in St. Cloud for 15 years and consider it my new hometown.

Family & Pets: Wife – Stefanie, Daughter – Abby (10), Son – Andrew (8). No pets currently, but we did have a pet Dachshund for 12 years before she passed away.

Do you have a favorite book or author? My favorite all time author is Vince Flynn who wrote the Mitch Rapp series. I enjoy reading historical narratives and am just finishing up the last of the Bill O'Reilly series – "Killing the Rising Sun".

Favorite movie? The Shawshank Redemption

Favorite food? I need to go with my dad's smoked brisket. All I can tell you is it takes about 15 hours of TLC and is delicious.

Do you have any hobbies, play any sports or favorite games? I am a sports nut. While I follow all the Minnesota sports teams, my #1 passion as a fan is the Minnesota Gophers football team (apparently I am a glutton for punishment). I really enjoy working with kids and I coach my kids' in-house and travel basketball and baseball teams.

Comment on your involvement in CMMA: I initially joined TSMA many years ago when I was in the staffing industry and have been active in both TSMA and CMMA. I joined the CMMA membership committee in 2012 and have been on the golf event committee since its inception. I am pleased to continue involvement in CMMA and TSMA now that I am with American Door Works.

What would CMMA members be surprised to learn about you? I lived in a small oil town in eastern Montana for 6 years during my childhood. It was a unique experience to be part of a class of six kids – I moved back to MN for 6th grade and my class in MT graduated with 5 kids.

St. Cloud Area Tour of Manufacturing



Over 1,500 visits were logged at six tour sites, including Park Industries pictured above, during the 2016 St. Cloud Area Tour of Manufacturing. Thank you to all involved in planning and funding this event, with a special "shout out" to the six manufacturers: Coldspring, DCI, Inc., MPG, New Flyer, Park Industries, and Talon Innovations.

CMMA Helps Fund Super-Mileage Cars

CMMA was pleased to award \$1000 to Glencoe-Silver Lake High School to help their engineering and industrial technology students design and build two new super mileage cars and upgrade two cars (see photo for last year's entry) to compete in the MTEEA Supermileage Challenge.



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Did You Know?

CMMA Board Election Underway

Nominations are being accepted for the CMMA Board of Director election through November 17, 2016. Seven two-year terms are up for election. Ballots will be issued via email in late November.

CMMA Promotes Youth Apprenticeships

Over 60 people attended the Youth Apprenticeship Meeting hosted by CMMA on August 10, helping put the “wheels in motion” for manufacturers to tackle this effective approach to workforce development. Louis Industries, for one, is in discussion with Paynesville High School to host a Youth Apprentice this year.

CMMA Foundation Fundraising Continues

CMMA Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, continues to solicit donations to support programs in the region that expose youth to careers in manufacturing. The Foundation raised \$17,500 during its first year! The goal of \$20,000 is within reach – call the office to inquire about how you can help reach this goal.

CMMA Board Welcomes Kelly Hansen, Park Industries

In August, Kelly Hansen, HR Director at Park Industries, was appointed to fill an open term on the CMMA Board of Directors. The term runs through December 2016. Welcome to the Board, Kelly!

CMMA members can access the **CieloChoice Health Exchange** offered by Meadowbrook Insurance Group. Try before you buy! Preview the major medical plans offered in your area without establishing an employer account. www.midwest-healthexchange.com.

The **Trifac Workers Compensation** self-insurance Fund is available exclusively to eligible members of CMMA and its three sister associations. Contact the CMMA office for details.

Post your manufacturing-related **job openings** on the CMMA website for FREE! Contact the CMMA office for details.

Bring a FREE guest!

CMMA members are encouraged to bring a prospective member to a CMMA breakfast meeting; your guest can attend (one time) free of charge!

Educators are FREE!

Invite a representative(s) from your local high to an upcoming CMMA meeting. Teachers, administrators, and students are encouraged to attend FREE of charge (includes a free breakfast). And – membership in CMMA is FREE to area high schools!

Letter From Les

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The ability to show young children about how and why manufacturing ties into unlimited resources. I'd like to encourage girls to think of these careers as they grow up. CMMA is very thankful for the resources, energy, laser focus and commitment that the event planning team selflessly poured into this important initiative. We also deeply appreciate the investments made by our partners and sponsors; please accept our sincere gratitude for sharing and supporting our vision.

While we relish this opportunity to celebrate success, we know that our work is not done. There's still more room for growth, innovation and enlightenment, all of which are right in CMMA's wheelhouse!

Thank you, manufacturers, for making our communities strong.

At CMMA, manufacturing matters. At CMMA, we're moving manufacturing forward!

Working hard to make you proud of your CMMA,

Les Engel
CMMA President
Owner, Engel Metallurgical

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