

Local Lodge 1529 Newsletter

January 2012



Editor: John Murray D49/2nd shift

Next meeting is Feb. 14th. at 2:00 P.M.

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State Of The Union Address

As we move into another year it's time to reflect on the past 12 months and look forward to 2012.

2011 was a year of huge changes at Amphenol. The institution of Work Flow Centers in the shell machining departments created the single greatest change in job assignments since the 1986 code consolidations. They were designed to loosely resemble the Department 48 & 36 Cells, without some of the work rules included in those areas, and unlike the Cells allowed for employees to operate more than one machine of a different type at the same time. This new "method" of manufacturing is designed, in theory, to increase productivity by increasing the number of "completed" parts each day from a given machining group or department. Unfortunately, the continued lack of work in many of the machining areas has made it very difficult to gage their effectiveness. It has been virtually impossible for our members on the floor to see any significant productivity improvements, even though the company has expressed their satisfaction with the results they have documented, and this generated a significant amount of anxiety and emotion on the shop floor. It's been a very frustrating process for all involved, especially those who were not lucky enough to be chosen for one of these new positions. It was hoped that the work load would increase as the productivity did and nobody would be left out. That did not happen. The selection process was refined throughout the year to be more subjective, although in some cases it still seemed somewhat arbitrary, which resulted in numerous grievances. Most, but not all, of those who did grieve were eventually selected for a work flow center job at a later date. The job losses throughout the year that have been attributed to these work flow centers were more often than not due to a lack of orders.

The stagnant world economy and inability of the U.S. Government to "govern" the Nation's financial resources, or lack thereof, had a detrimental effect on the business and our members in 2011 as sales continued to lag far below the pre 2008 levels. While we saw several spikes in employment throughout the year, they were usually precipitated by issues here at our facility rather than sales increases. Even with the passage of a new Defense Budget expectations are there will be no significant increases in the work load here in Sidney. Proposed Defense Budget cuts in 2013 are an even bigger concern moving forward.

And then there was the flood. After 2006 it was assumed by most that it was unlikely in our lifetime that we would see another such occurrence, but to all our disappointment we went through an almost identical event on September 8, 2011. It was truly heartbreaking at 3am that morning to see the water start pouring into the building, knowing what the most likely outcome would be. As the water level continued to rise it became obvious that we were all in big trouble, and that things would never be "business as usual" in Sidney, NY. While I had every expectation that we would be informed that the facility was closing, I was pleasantly surprised to find out that would not be the case, and a significant number of our members pitched in immediately to get operations back on track. We did so in record time, having learned many lessons from 2006, and got product moving out the door to our customers within a month. I'm pleased that corporate recognized all the hard work that went into this cleanup and gave those who worked the financial recognition they deserved for doing an outstanding job. While the cleanup was accomplished in record time, the lingering concerns of many of our customers required the company to make some major decisions regarding its Sidney facilities. They could no longer look at these floods as 100 year events, and the company decided the only way it could reasonably assure its customers that this would never happen again was to build a facility that could never be affected by high water, and after months of negotiations with the New York State Governor's Office,

a \$20 million financial incentive package was secured that would allow for the construction of a new facility just west of the K-Mart property on Delaware Avenue in Sidney. The company recognized one of its greatest single assets, is the decades of experience its employees supply every business day, and wanted to relocate close enough to not lose that expertise. The necessity to stay close to the current Plating facility, which will remain where it is with a berm built around it for protection, also figured into the decision making process. Unfortunately, the new facility will be significantly smaller than the present one, and not all operations will be moved. Significant reductions in Molding, and other areas like Diecast are planned, creating future employment concerns for many of our members. Hopefully any potential job losses will be minimized through attrition and careful planning in the layout of the new facility.

2011 was a very difficult year for our members, and 2012 will be no less dynamic as we all move towards a new chapter in the history of our business here in Sidney. While there is no known ground breaking date for the new plant, it is anticipated work will begin this spring. As long as equipment remains in the present facility there is a risk it will be damaged or lost again in another flooding incident, as once again there has been no definitive movement towards making provisions to prevent future occurrences. New Work Flow Centers, and changes to existing ones, will continue to take place as work dictates. Hopefully this will mean new opportunities for those who have not yet had a chance to participate in the process. And hopefully the economy will finally turn around in 2012, and our government officials will stop their partisan bickering and pass spending authorizations that will allow our customers to once again feel confident enough to start buying our products in more significant numbers. It's a lot to ask for, but we can hope!

The State of this Union is good thanks to the hard work and dedication of its members. We have weathered significant work rule changes and our second flood in five years. While many of our members are sometimes frustrated at what seems to be a reluctance or inability of this Union to address the changes we have seen, I can assure everyone we have spent thousands of hours dealing with the issues that have been created and working out solutions that have minimized the down side for our members. 2011 wasn't an easy or pleasant year, but as always we have persevered. While we have seen many changes here in the past several decades, one thing has remained constant – we are still here, and we still make the best connectors in the business!

Bruce J. Hodges, President



Charlie Howe, winner of Amphenol's 2011 United Way raffle, won a 32" flat screen television.

On December 15th, 2011, our application for TRA/TAA Assistance was approved by the U.S. Dept. of Labor. In addition, the application was back dated to cover anyone laid off from February 13th, 2010 forward, which is good news for anyone who has lost their job at Amphenol due to work being shipped to Mexico, China, and other Amphenol off-shore facilities. You can read the complete document on our website at www.iam1529.org.