

THE MICKEY SPIRIT

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“At Mickey, state-of-the-art doesn’t only apply to equipment and technology. It also applies to our people. We don’t believe you can have one without the other.”

— ‘In-Sink’
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New Brake Press Has Bending Force Up To 440 Tons

Mickey Truck Bodies has purchased a new state-of-the-art hydraulic brake press for bending metal body and trailer components such as posts, headers, gussets and bumper parts, among others. The machine, manufactured by Italy-based C.R. Electronics, the leading European manufacturer of automated press brakes, features a six-axis back gauge and integral hydraulic system with all the hydraulic components, including the pumps, built inside the unit.

The \$250,000 machine weighs about 56 tons, has a bending force up to 440 tons and can bend parts that are up to 20 feet, four inches long. It was installed in a specially designed area of Mickey’s main manufacturing complex in High Point on a dedicated



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14-inch reinforced concrete foundation inside the machine department.

C.R. engineers from Italy oversaw the entire installation, start up and operator training of the new machine, which was brought into the plant in segments and constructed on

the foundation due to its massive finished size.

“We are the only company in this industry, that I am aware of, that is operating a unit like this,” says Rodney Bohner, General Manager for

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New Tropicana Distribution Centers Feature Mickey Fleets

A contingent of managers from Tropicana, Mickey, First Fleet (a leasing company), International Trucks/Sun State International, and Sunbelt Transport Refrigeration (a FL-based Carrier dealership) were on hand to help open Tropicana’s newest Distribution Center last month in Indianapolis.

The opening was part of Tropicana’s plan to open a network of freestanding regional DCs, each equipped



At Mickey HQ in High Point, NC, from left: Pat Gaskins, First Fleet; Jay Costa, Tropicana; Kirk Rutherford, First Fleet; Jim Hiatt and Wayne Childress, Mickey; Cynthia Kolb, International; Dave Metcalf and Mike Kleesties, Sun State International; Tom Berish, Tropicana; Scott Turnage, Sunbelt; Rod Bohner, Mickey; Chuck Schwenzler, Tropicana; and Craig Becker, Mickey.

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New Brake Press Provides Improved 'Form, Fit and Function'

(From page 1)

Mickey's Van and Vending Manufacturing Operations. "We will use it for any part that requires metal bending for all of our divisions – beverage, van body, vending and EV. In the past much of that work was outsourced, or we used one of two older machines in the Mickey beverage plant that required a great deal of setup. This machine is so advanced and so efficient, we also expect to use it to manufacture parts for outside customers."

Improved quality

For Mickey's customers, the new hydraulic brake press means improved "form, fit and function" of the Mickey delivery units due to better quality parts, says Bohner. "The tolerances of the part are going to be that much more accurate in terms of dimensional values," he explains. "Some of the parts that we checked coming off this machine were within thousandths of an inch, compared to the older machines which could deliver as much as a plus or minus .030 to .060. tolerance range. It's a much more durable and reliable part,

which means a much more durable and reliable unit that will require less maintenance and deliver a longer and more profitable life. The tolerance levels may not be noticeable to the customer's naked eye, but the customer will definitely notice that the unit is stronger and requires less maintenance."

The new computerized brake press features an on-board self-diagnostics system that can be connected to a modem and downloaded to the C.R. factory in Italy for accurate, professional and fast troubleshooting. In addition, the machine has an on-board color CNC screen for three-dimensional programming and a Delan 65 control system.

"We can program the press to automatically set the back gauging, go through the bend sequences to identify any interference, set the ram height of the machine, and automatically select the dies for the particular job," Bohner explains. "Once a part has been programmed, that part is in the system's computer memory forever and can be activated simply by entering the part reference number. It's



Joe Godwin, Project Manager for Guy M. Turner, Inc., moving engineers (facing camera), oversees the unloading and technical preparation for moving the sub assemblies of the CR Electronics' brake press into Mickey's 17,000-square-foot machine room.

ready to run."

The new machine features two safety light guards, including an Akas laser light guard on the front that protects the operator. It also features a light guard on the back that automatically shuts down the machine instantly when a person comes too close to the back gauging mechanism.

A hydraulic planting mechanism automatically locks the die in place so that the operator does not have to hand tighten bolts to keep the die in its holders. The machine features all precision-ground European tooling, and comes in three-foot die segments that allows the operator to do "box forming" and only repair a small section of the die rather than replace the entire part, "which lowers the overall operation and maintenance cost of this piece of equipment," according to Bohner.

The machine also features "auto crowning," which eliminates the need to "shim" the lower die holder.

"The completely automated

tool allows us to bring outside work back in house and at the same time helps us achieve three objectives: quality of parts, manufacturing efficiency and on-time delivery," says Bohner. "It also improves capacity because there are no tedious and repetitive set ups. Once the part data is in the system it is in there forever or can be quickly downloaded."

Overall C.R. Electronics orchestrated over 240 man-hours in training qualified Mickey employees to operate the hydraulic brake press. There are currently three Mickey employees certified to operate the machine, and Mickey will be training several other employees to program the unit.

"Eventually we are going to be able to program the machine off-line while it is operating, which will improve our efficiency on the floor even more," Bohner explains. "We can be running one part while another is being programmed so it's ready to go immediately."



Rodney Bohner with the assembled, ready-to-run brake press in the Mickey machine room in High Point, NC

New Job, New Baby Arrive Together for Mickey's Mike Parker

Mike Parker has been promoted to General Manager of the Midwest Reconditioning & Service Center in Bloomington, IL. He reports to Greg McLaughlin, Mickey's Vice President of Corporate Reconditioning and Service.

A 13-year veteran of the truck body and trailer reconditioning and service field, Parker joined Mickey in 2000 as Sales Manager of the Midwest Reconditioning & Service Center, his most recent position, and before that spent 10 years with the Centennial Body division of Douglas & Lomason Co. At Centennial he was Midwest Sales Manager responsible for new, used and reconditioned equipment, and was based out of Kansas City, MO.

Parker received his Bachelor of Science degree from Southwest Missouri State University in 1990.

Mike has been instrumental in developing new customer relationships and expanding our business with existing customers throughout the Midwest," says McLaughlin. "He has both technical and business experience in this industry, which makes him uniquely qualified to head up one of our company-owned Reconditioning & Service operations."

"Mickey is the clear-cut leader in the new delivery equipment business and in reconditioning and service, and it's always a privilege to work for the leader," says Parker. "As a company we have very high standards to



Mike Parker with his wife Kerrie, daughter Emily and their newest addition Nathan.

uphold in everything we do, and as individuals we know we are the best in the business when we move up through the ranks at Mickey."

Parker and his wife Kerrie just welcomed their second

child – Nathan – who was born on August 13. They also have a daughter, Emily, who is two years old.

In his spare time Parker likes to golf and keep physically fit.

Tropicana, with Help from Some Friends, Opens DCs 'Without A Hitch'

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with eight to 15 Mickey refrigerated van bodies, to serve its local customers faster and more efficiently.

"Tropicana is getting very good at these openings, and this one in Indianapolis came off without a hitch," says Jim Hiatt, Mickey VP. "The center opened on a Monday at

4AM and all the drivers were there and the trucks were loaded and ready to roll. I know because I was one of the supplier representatives that was there at that hour to witness the event."

Following the opening, representatives from Tropicana and their business partners flew to Mickey's

headquarters in High Point, NC for a two-day meeting to assess the opening and fleet coordination, and also to review plans for a revised rear bumper configuration on the refrigerated Tropicana body.

"As all the business partners in this project become more familiar with one another and each other's capabilities, everything becomes much

smoother," says Hiatt. "We all had outstanding communication leading up to the Indianapolis opening and it showed in the final execution. In addition to meeting after every opening at one of the supplier venues, we also hold weekly conference calls and on certain projects we even talk daily. The cooperation has been outstanding."

Steve McLaughlin, Early Driver of Mickey Recon, Celebrates 15 Years

Steve McLaughlin, one the pioneers of Mickey's Reconditioning & Service Center Division in the early 1980s and currently the General Manager of the company's Northeast facility in Farmingdale, NJ, celebrated his 15-year anniversary at Mickey on August 17.

McLaughlin actually joined Mickey in 1980 to manage the company's Thomasville, NC

recon center, which was then Mickey's only reconditioning center. Before he left that post to move to the west coast to sell new equipment for Mickey, Steve hired his brother, Greg, to replace him. Steve left the company and returned in 1988 to work for Greg, who is now Mickey's Corporate VP in charge of

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Each new Tropicana Distribution Center will open up with a fleet of 8 to 15 refrigerated van bodies featuring Carrier refrigeration units.

Mickey Truck Bodies Sales Directory

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800-334-9061

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Wayne Childress, NC

800-334-9061

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T.J. DoVale, GA

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IN-'SINK'

State-of-the-art is not just for machines, at least not at Mickey

By Dean Sink, President

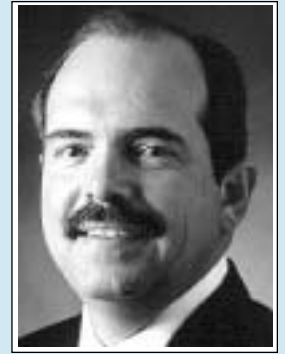
The term "state-of-the-art" means different things to different people, and in general I think it is an overused term typically invoked to create awe and admiration. I don't use the phrase all that much myself, but when I do, as I have recently to describe our new hydraulic brake press (page 1 of this issue), I have a simple interpretation, and it is this: It helps us all do our jobs better, more productively and more safely, and it allows us to build and supply our customers with the very best products in terms of reliability, durability and efficiency at competitive prices. End of story.

Now, I certainly don't want to sound arrogant, because to me state-of-the-art has nothing to do with who has a faster car or a better brake press. It's just about who wants to run the most efficient manufacturing business and deliver the best quality products and services at a competitive price when and where the customer wants them. If we at Mickey can do all of those things and do them better than anyone else by using a horse and buggy, we would use the horse and buggy. But that's just not being realistic.

So we invest in state-of-the-art equipment like our new brake press, and our plasma cutter and our automated paint booths and the list goes on and on. We buy from leading manufacturers in their field wherever they are because they have the talent and expertise and resources to get us off on the right foot and keep us going under any and all circumstances. We invest both time and money in top notch training programs to so that we have the most capable people operating and maintaining our state-of-the-art equipment. And we make sure the equipment is a significant improvement over the equipment and processes it is replacing. We don't buy anything we don't need.

Keeping up with state-of-the-art in the manufacturing business isn't always easy, and I don't have to tell you it isn't usually cheap. But at Mickey, when it comes to state-of-the-art, we don't look for easy or cheap. We just look for the best. We bought our brake press in Italy, but we would have bought it in Atlantic City if it was what we wanted and needed. And we have been in the manufacturing business long enough to know that what is state-of-the-art today may be second generation tomorrow. (If you purchased a PC for your family last Christmas, you know exactly what I am talking about.) We have very talented technical people here at Mickey, like Rodney Bohner, our General Manager for Van and Vending Manufacturing Operations who worked very closely with the Italian brake press manufacturer to purchase exactly what we needed. Rodney, one of our highest ranking production managers, will continue as the chief point person between Mickey and the manufacturer, and he will eventually become one of the foremost U.S. experts on this type of machine – if he isn't already.

At Mickey, state-of-the-art doesn't only apply to equipment and technology. It also applies to our people. We don't believe you can have one without the other.



Recon Pioneer Celebrates 15 Years at Mickey

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reconditioning and service.

From the single facility in Thomasville, a few miles from the company's manufacturing complex in High Point, Mickey now has five company-owned and -operated Service & Reconditioning Centers in strategic locations

throughout the country.

During his tenure at the Northeast Center in NJ, Steve McLaughlin has spearheaded several plant expansions and the move to a new location, also in NJ, in 2000. The new plant is 22,000 square feet, nearly double the previous facility.



Steve McLaughlin

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