

Q&A

eric WILSON

PRESIDENT

THE DAYTON FORGING & HEAT TREATING CO.

GS: *This year marks the company's 90th year in business. How did it come to be founded?*

EW: William Hewitt was a journeyman blacksmith who relocated to Dayton, Ohio, in 1919 to get involved in heat treating parts for airplanes. Not only were the Wright brothers one of our first customers, there was also a great deal of activity building planes for the war effort, so I guess you could say the company's roots share those of the country's developing aircraft and machine tool industries. Harlan Todd purchased the company from Mr. Hewitt in the late sixties, and he has been the owner of record ever since. So in nearly a century we've only had two owners, and the company remains a family-owned enterprise to this day.

GS: *How is the company structured, from a physical standpoint, and what are your capabilities?*

EW: We were originally located in one building a bit closer to the downtown area, but we're only a mile or so outside of Dayton at our current location, and we're near the interstate system to insure quick shipping. With about 15 acres, we have plenty of room to grow, and we have expanded on a number of occasions over the years. These days our business is basically made up of three divisions, which include the machining/bar stock division,


our heat-treat facility, and our forge shop, and each of these are found in their own dedicated building. We employ about 75 people on average, and we have approximately 300,000 square feet of space under roof. As for our equipment, we put in our first 750-ton electro-hydraulic press in the seventies when they first came available to replace the old hammer presses, and we installed an 1,800-ton press a year ago that enables us to produce shafts up to 36,000 pounds. We also invested in a new manipulator, which is used to remove parts from the furnace and onto the press, and generally to manipulate the pieces since we're using flat dies. We've always been a job shop, so we really shine when people need a part, or a small number of parts, very quickly. As for gear blanks, we can handle up to a 58-inch OD, and everything from 100-pound to around 12,000-pound gears. One thing gear companies will be particularly interested to learn is that we generally keep about a million pounds of rough-turned bar stock on hand so that we can just saw your piece, drill it, and ship it the next day. We've found that a lot of gear manufacturers, and others as well, aren't keeping as much spare material on hand as they once did, so this is an excellent resource for people who need parts on short notice. That helps them to keep their own inventory costs down, and we've also worked with our steel suppliers to make sure that our prices are attractive. So in many ways we offer one-stop shopping for your steel, rough machining, forging, and heat-treating needs.

GS: *What markets do you serve, and where are your customers located?*

EW: As a job shop we're involved in quite a variety of different markets, but we do a lot of work for the machine tool and mining

industries, and we ship to customers who are found all across the United States, with a few also based in Canada. The thing about heat treating is that you'll often find that it's a more localized operation than some others, but we tend to draw from a bigger pool of customers because of our large furnaces and extensive capabilities. Like I mentioned, our supply of bar stock and our centralized location allows us to complete and ship orders to companies all around the country very quickly, but we also offer stocking programs for some of our customers. While each

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agreement is tailored to the client's specific needs, one scenario might involve someone placing an order for 100 parts a year, and we agree to keep five or 10 on hand for immediate shipment. What it boils down to is that we are known for being fast, flexible, and for doing whatever it takes to help our customers succeed in reaching their own professional goals. 

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