

Highlighting Colonial Machine

Colonial Machine is located in the small borough of Pleasantville, Pennsylvania, but they do business with a big industry around the world. It machines and fabricates piping components to the nuclear-power industry, and business is good.

“Fifty percent of our business is related to the nuclear industry,” said Lucas Cherry, quality assurance manager for Colonial Machine. He added that his 20-employee company has served some of the same customers for 40 years.



Colonial Machine was started in 1968 by Glenn Mallory, who was working as a pipe salesman for a company based in Pittsburgh. According to Jed Zahner, Cherry’s cousin and the production manager for Colonial Machine, Mallory was always being asked by his customers if he sold small piping parts. “Glenn decided that he would fabricate the parts himself, and the business was born,” Zahner said.

Today, 51 years later, the company is still going strong. “We have a niche business,” Cherry said. “Our specialty is seamless stub-ends. We’re one of the few domestic companies to be able to offer this product,” he added.

While nuclear power is not growing at the rate it once was, Colonial Machine fabricates items that can be used in various aspects of the nuclear industry, thus helping to keep them busy. “We even make the flow meters that are found in power plants all over the world,” Cherry said.



Colonial Machine has a quality program meeting the requirements of 10 CFR 50 Appendix B, 10 CFR Part 21, and NCA 3800, as is required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for companies that sell parts which end up in nuclear facilities. “When we get audited, every piece of paper is examined to see that someone has checked off all of the specs. Even the finished products are closely examined,” Cherry said.

Cherry noted that one of the “secrets” to Colonial Machine’s success is that they’re within a half hour of good vendors. “That really helps to keep costs down,” Cherry said. And sometimes the demise of other companies is CM’s gain. “We buy used trucks and machines, because there are many good ones available. That helps keeps our costs down, which then benefits our customers,” Cherry said.

While things are going well at the company, Cherry indicated that Colonial Machine has some needs it wouldn’t mind filling. “Manual machinists are a dying breed, and we’re always looking for people who can run the older-style manual machines,” Cherry said. “A good product inspector can always be useful, too,” Cherry added.

Looking toward the future, Cherry noted that Colonial Machine is preparing to do business with Shell Chemical’s “cracker” plant in Beaver County that’s slated to open in 2022. “We’re currently in the process of getting ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certified. That is required to be able to supply items to the cracker plant,” Cherry said.

The future looks bright for Colonial Machine, given that the new certification will open up new avenues for business. "We'll have our ISO certification by the end of the year," Cherry said. Zahner, Colonial Machine's production manager, added, "Morale is up; we are working as a team now more than ever."

This machine shop in Pleasantville is flexing its muscles, and the rest of the country is starting to take notice. Colonial Machine can be contacted by email at www.thecolonialmachinecompany.com, or by phone at (814) 589-7033.