

Friday January 7, 2011

New Jersey 65th Anniversary/Retirement Party

Tavistock Country Club, Haddonfield, NJ

MANY THANKS TO ALL FOR COMING TONIGHT AND MOST OF ALL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THIS CELEBRATION.

I SPEAK TO YOU AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRECISION AUTOMATION OF INDIANA FAMILY.

I AM JOINED TODAY BY BOB AND NORMA DAILY, MARY ANN HUFFMON, BILL AND LAURA HUFFMON, AND SUE FOULKS.

WE REPRESENT ALL THE ASSOCIATES CURRENTLY EMPLOYED THERE AS WELL AS THE MANY EMPLOYED THROUGH THE YEARS AT THE INDIANA COMPANY.

MR. REXON FOUNDED THE INDIANA COMPANY IN JULY 1953.

MANY OF YOU HAVE HEARD SOME OF OUR HISTORY BECAUSE OF THE MANY TALES AND STORIES TOLD THROUGH THE YEARS.

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO PUT MY VERSION OF OUR STARTUP STORY TOGETHER AND SHARE IT WITH YOU.

I HOPE IT IS NOT TOO LONG BUT IT TAKES A WHILE TO TELL THE STORY WITH ANY CLARITY.

SOME TIME IN 1952 THE ENGINEERS AT GENERAL ELECTRIC IN TRENTON, NJ WERE CHALLENGED WITH THE TASK OF SETTING UP A NEW MANUFACTURING OPERATION IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY TO PRODUCE MAJOR APPLIANCES.

TO DO THIS THEY WERE GOING TO NEED A LOT OF TOOLING AND OUTSIDE VENDOR HELP.

MANY OF THEM ALREADY RELIED ON A FELLOW NAMED FRED WHO HAD A LITTLE MACHINE SHOP IN PENNSAUKEN, NJ.

THIS FRED FELLOW CLAIMED HE COULD DO ANYTHING AND HE COULD DO IT FAST.

HE HAD BEEN A PRETTY GOOD VENDOR FOR THEM SO FAR BUT THEY KNEW HE COULD NOT CONTINUE TO HELP THEM AS MUCH AS THEY WERE GOING TO NEED BECAUSE HE WAS SOON TO BE 600 MILES AWAY INSTEAD OF JUST A FEW.

THEY ALSO KNEW FRED WAS A GOOD SPORT SO WHY NOT GET HIM TO GO TO KENTUCKY TO SET UP ANOTHER SHOP.

WITH HIS JERSEY ACCENT HE WAS SURE TO BE A BIG HIT WITH THE GOOD OLE BOYS OF KENTUCKY.

AFTER A LOT OF CONSIDERATION ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY, FRED SAID

“WHAT THE HELL”

AND HE TOLD THE ENGINEERS HE WOULD DO IT.

AFTER ALL, WHAT COULD HE LOSE? THIS WAY HE COULD KEEP THEIR BUSINESS.

HE FIGURED STARTING A NEW COMPANY WOULD ONLY BE A LITTLE PROBLEM.

HE ALREADY HAD THE MACHINES FROM THE DEAL HE HAD MADE WITH STANLEY WRIGHT IN THE PURCHASE OF HIS SHOP AND HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO SELL ANY OF STAN'S JUNK,

JUST SHIP IT TO KENTUCKY.

HE COULD HIRE A COUPLE OF MACHINISTS AND FIND SOMEONE TO RUN IT FOR HIM AND ALL WOULD BE OKAY.

WHAT HE DID NOT REALIZE WAS THAT HE WAS FROM THE NORTH AND EVEN THOUGH LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY WAS NORTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE, MOST PEOPLE IN KENTUCKY CONSIDERED THEMSELVES TO BE PART OF THE SOUTH.

FORTUNATELY FOR US, MR. REXON LOCATED HIS NEW SHOP ACROSS THE RIVER IN A STATE HE HAD ONLY HEARD OF, ONE CALLED INDIANA.

FIRST THING HE NEEDED WAS A GOOD LAWYER SO HE WENT TO THE BOOK THAT HAD ALL THE LAWYERS LISTED IN IT, CLOSED HIS EYES AND POINTED.

WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES, HIS POINTER FINGER WAS POINTED AT THE NAME OF TOM POINTER. THIS HAD TO BE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

AT THE TIME FRED DIDN'T KNOW HOW GOOD OF A CHOICE HE HAD MADE.

TOM KNEW THE ROPES AROUND TOWN AND HOW TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN IF HE LIKED YOU.

TOM LIKED FRED!

FRED LIKED TOM!

TOM HELPED FIND A BUILDING THAT FIT FRED'S NEEDS.

KNOWING TOM'S REPUTATION, I AM NOT SURE HOW MUCH HE REALLY LIKED FRED.

THE BUILDING THAT TOM PERSUADED FRED TO PURCHASE WAS AN OLD MOVIE THEATER LOCATED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF AN AREA CALLED "CLAYSBURG".

KEEP IN MIND THIS WAS 1953 AND THIS YANKEE FROM NEW JERSEY WAS OPENING UP A MACHINE SHOP RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD.

THESE RESIDENTS WERE NOT HAPPY THAT THIS NEW JERSEY GUY ENDED ALL HOPE OF THE THEATER EVER REOPENING.

ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE, INSIDE THE BUILDING THE FLOOR STILL SLOPED AND THE TICKET BOOTH AND PROJECTION ROOM WERE ALL STILL INTACT.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE OLDER, IT EVEN HAD THE OLD ROUND BLUE THEATER LIGHTS HANGING ON THE WALL.

THE CHAIRS, PROJECTOR AND THE SCREEN WERE GONE BUT THAT WAS ABOUT ALL.

IN ORDER TO MAKE IT A MACHINE SHOP, MUCH HAD TO BE DONE.

THE TICKET BOOTH WAS REMOVED AND THE FLOOR LEVELED.

NOW FRED COULD BRING IN A COUPLE OF BRIDGEPORTS AND A SOUTH BEND LATHE OR TWO.

STAN HAD THESE AS WELL AS AN OLD SMALL SHAPER, A HORIZONTAL MILL, AN OLD DRILL PRESS AND OTHER SUPPORTING SHOP ITEMS.

ALL FRED HAD TO DO WAS TO GET THEM TO INDIANA AND PRECISION PARTS COMPANY, INCORPORATED OF INDIANA WAS READY TO GO.

I AM NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THIS BUT I THINK MR. REXON EITHER DROVE THE TRUCK TO INDIANA OR HE DROVE HIS FORD STATION WAGON LOADED WITH AS MUCH AS THE TIRES COULD POSSIBLY CARRY WITH THESE ITEMS.

I DO KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE NEVER DROVE TO INDIANA WITHOUT HAULING SOMETHING.

SO THAT WAS OUR BEGINNING.

THE EARLY YEARS WERE A STRUGGLE.

I AM CONFIDENT THERE WERE MANY OCCASIONS HE THOUGHT ABOUT GIVING UP AND CLOSING THE PLANT.

I DON'T KNOW IF HE WAS JUST TOO STUBBORN TO QUIT ON THE IDEA OF MAKING A SECOND PLANT WORK, OR IF IT WAS PERSONAL PRIDE.

EITHER WAY WE ARE STILL THERE AND DIGGING OUR WAY OUT OF A VERY SLUGGISH TWO YEARS OF ACTIVITY.

WE ARE ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY AND I HOPE TO PROSPERITY.

TO WRAP UP, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT MY ADMIRATION, RESPECT AND LOVE INTO THE WORDS THAT I HAVE IN MY HEART FOR MR. REXON.

I KNOW THESE 3 WORDS ARE ONLY A VERY SMALL PART OF THE FEELINGS I HAVE FOR THIS MAN.

HE HAS BEEN A MENTOR,

A TEACHER,

A FRIEND,

A COUNSELOR,

A BOSS,

A FATHER FIGURE

AND MUCH MORE.

SINCE HE HAS SCALED BACK HIS OVERSIGHT OF OUR COMPANY, I KNOW THAT I MISS HIM.

WE DON'T TALK AS MUCH AS WE USED TO

--- I MISS TALKING TO HIM.

HE DOESN'T VISIT WITH US IN INDIANA LIKE HE USED TO

--- I MISS SEEING HIM.

HE DOESN'T GIVE ME ADVICE LIKE HE ONCE DID

--- I MISS HIS LEADERSHIP.

HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME WHEN I WOULD REACH OUT FOR HIS COUNSELING

--- I MISS HIS GUIDANCE.

HE DOESN'T GIVE ME CRITICISM LIKE HE ONCE DID ---

--- I EVEN MISS HIM FOR THAT.

THE INDIANA COMPANY HAS HAD TO GO DOWN MANY BUMPY ROADS.

MANY OF THOSE BUMPS COULD HAVE BEEN REASON ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GIVE UP AND JUST CLOSE UP SHOP.

THANKFULLY HE NEVER CHOSE THAT OPTION.

MR. REXON HAS ALWAYS SUPPORTED OUR INDIANA COMPANY THROUGH BAD TIMES AND FULL OF PRAISE IN GOOD TIMES.

HE NEVER GAVE UP ON THE PEOPLE.

THOSE OF US WORKING THERE NOW AND THOSE THAT PRECEDED US ARE THANKFULL FOR HIS SUPPORT.

I THINK IN PART, HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR US CAME FROM NOT BEING ABLE TO QUIT.

HE ALWAYS BELIEVED THERE IS A WAY TO SUCCEED.

DON'T GIVE UP.

FIGURE OUT WHAT IS NOT WORKING AND TRY AGAIN.

DON'T GIVE UP.

QUITTING HAS NEVER BEEN A PART OF HIS BUSINESS PLAN.

MY LOVE AND ADMIRATION GO OUT TO YOU FRED REXON.

WE MISS YOU.

SINCE 1964 I HAVE BEEN A PART OF YOUR FAMILY.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE OPPORTUNITY OF SHARING SO MANY YEARS WITH YOU.

Prepared and delivered by Glen A. Morris, Jan. 7, 2011