

Behind The Scenes— The Women in Manufacturing

Reminding us of the importance of manufacturing in our community, we recently celebrated manufacturing week in the Yankton community from September 28-October 2 with tours, open houses and a Manufacturer Employee Olympics. It's no secret that manufacturing is crucial to Yankton, with it being one of four top major industries in the community and making up over 18% of our community's workforce according to the Yankton Chamber of Commerce website www.yanktonsd.com. A company is only as successful as the employees behind it, and I focused on some of the dedicated women behind the scenes in the September/October issue of Her Voice. With such an array of devoted women in our community, I wasn't able to focus on everyone in just one article so I am spotlighting some of the other dedicated women in the community.

Freeman Company

Founded in 1937, the Freeman Company manufactures precision-turned and machined parts used in general aviation, adding NC/CNC turning machining to its manufacturing capabilities in the 1980's. The company grew from manufacturing small-machined standard parts to developing its expertise and becoming certified for the manufacture of "Flight Safety" and "Flight-Critical" parts, components and assemblies for the Aerospace industry (www.freemanmanufacturing.com).

Adeline Brown has worked for the Freeman Company just three years shy of 50 years. Though now part-time to enjoy retirement, she previously worked full-time for the company, starting at the company after her aunt and mother, both employees, told her about a job opening. She helps with paperwork and in shipping/receiving. Highly cross-trained over the years, she has worked in just about every department during her career, spending time in drill and deburr, inspection, paint, shipping and receiving, with CNC machines being the lone item not being trained in. Providing hand-written instructions, job routers and shipments back in her early days with the company, she remembers the days prior to computers, difficult for many to imagine with today's technology.

Joan Suing, Quality Engineer, has been with the company for 35 years, starting with the company after word of mouth as Brown did. Cindy Thorkildsen started twelve years ago and is in the Sales/Contracts/Customer Service Department. She got her start part-time in the quoting department.

As a hobby, Thorkildsen loves camping with her husband and her dogs, including some dog training and hunting, while Suing also enjoys outdoor activities of walking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking and spending time with family. Now that Brown is working part-time, she has more time to enjoy her hobbies of reading, gardening and working

with flowers in the summer and when the temperature drops in the winter she likes to crochet, complete crossword puzzles and watch some game shows.

Kolberg-Pioneer, Inc

Kolberg-Pioneer, Inc. (KPI) manufactures equipment such as rock crushers, conveyors, washing equipment and portable stationary plants used for asphalt road building and aggregate processing. They have been located in Yankton for 50 years, employing more than 300 people locally.

Kathie Wieseler, Design Drafter, has been with KPI for twelve years. She moved to Yankton after her kids were out on their own, to be closer to her parents and sister. Her husband also worked in Yankton. Angela Mann has been a Technical Writer with KPI for nine years, getting recommended for her position by her fiancée (now husband) also employed with the company. Josey Lucht, Ship-Out Coordinator, has been with the company for eight years, finding out about job openings from her brother-in-law, also employed with the company.

Wieseler enjoys spending time with family and friends and especially her grandkids, stating, "Seeing my grandkids grow up is especially rewarding." She also enjoys reading, making crafts, cooking and spending time outdoors. Mann also enjoys spending time outdoors with her three active Beagles, taking them for walks and to the dog park. I have to say that Mann's Beagles are adorable! She also reads anything and everything and is actively involved in Toastmasters. Lucht is a runner, but most often ends up running after something for her two kids. When this busy mom does have a little down time, she enjoys "growing roots" into the couch with a good book.

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