IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF MONTANA MANUFACTURERS

Forward Focus

Semttool Strides Toward World Class Manufacturing

By Deborah Nash

Gauging the health of your business in an industry with cyclical growth and downturns can be challenging. Sales and profit as indicators during a high demand cycle could mask inefficiencies that create unnecessary turbulence during a downturn.

Benchmarking performance in key areas and observing trend data, on the other hand, can help uncover improvement potential, keeping you ahead of competitors. It can help guide and prioritize management decisions that put you in charge of the health of your business and elevate customer satisfaction. Semttool in Kalispell recently enhanced its quality systems to the ISO 900l:2000 standard, choosing quality objectives that will benchmark and trend performance as it strides toward World Class Manufacturing.

Semitool is a worldwide leader in the design, manufacture and support of high performance equipment used in the manufacturing of semiconductors. Their customers use this equipment to produce electronic chips like those that have given us the cell phone, the iPod®, even the monitoring of your car engine. Semitool systems are used for electroplating copper, gold, solder, and other metals onto silicon wafers. Their surface preparation systems perform cleaning, stripping and etching on silicon wafers, the platforms on which devices are built. Semitool also produces cleaning systems for wafer transport containers. These machines are complex and custom-built, requiring time

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Nicholson Joins MMEC

Bill Nicholson, a native of Chinook, Mont., joined the staff of Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) in November as Field Engineer in the Kalispell service area, which includes northwestern Montana communities. He received his bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology at MSU–Bozeman in 1987 and brings a breadth of experience in manufacturing. His expertise in manufacturing processes, research and development, and Lean Manufacturing include service as a Lean Expert for Honeywell Electronic Materials from 2002–2004 and as a production manager and in other capacities for Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Spokane, from 1990–2000. Bill has had a Professional Engineering (Wash.) license since 1994. He is married to Rochelle Fuhrman, a CPA, and they have four children, Brayden, Ashlyn, Hunter and Morgan. He can be reached at the Flathead Regional Business Center, 406-756-8329.
**Increased efficiency. Higher productivity.** Worthy goals to be sure, and we spend a great deal of time and other resources pursuing them. But to what end? To reduce cost and improve profits? Yes. But is that enough?

If you are producing a commodity, the lowest delivered cost wins the business, making efficiency and productivity a central strategy. But, if you are manufacturing higher valued, non-commodity products, increasing efficiency and raising productivity are only part of the equation for real success. Why?

Production capacity often increases when efficiency improves. Failure to utilize new-found capacity represents a huge opportunity cost! Efficiency, in turn, usually reduces operating costs, but the increased capacity that results creates another opportunity that could yield huge incremental returns.

Marketing and sales strategies to grow your valued customer base and take advantage of increased capacity are important ingredients in your business improvement effort. Management should be working on new sales and new markets in parallel with efficiency improvement efforts in the manufacturing processes. That’s where overseas markets and exporting can be extremely valuable. These markets may provide more valued customers or an opportunity for marketing an innovation on an existing product.

The United States and Australia recently signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that can be very beneficial for Montana’s manufacturers. This is a powerful agreement, because it removes tariffs, expands access to government contracts there, offers better protection for patents and copyrights, and reduces the cost and access to cross-border services in legal and financial arenas, leaving only the physical barriers of distance and logistical costs. This is good news for Montanans who are used to dealing with remote markets, and who are very creative in business.

A recent study, conducted for SBA by Palmetto Consulting in Georgia, found that very small firms with unique products or technological advantage do invest the effort into exporting and that it can be a way to achieve economies of scale. Australia is Montana’s 14th largest export market. Relationship-building efforts by U.S. Senator Max Baucus and a contingent that recently completed a trade mission to Australia may move that ranking up and strengthen Australia as a platform for further exports of U.S. goods to other, larger markets in the region. The new FTA opens doors to more familiar trade relationships and reasonable considerations between buyer and seller in our countries.

Agreements like this will encourage a receptive audience and a level playing field for the products you generate using your increased capacity. Trading with Australia will be more like trading within the U.S.—with a big pond en route!

**✦ ✦ ✦**

MMEC recently tapped the marketing expertise of the Montana World Trade Center (MWTC) at the University of Montana in a collaborative agreement with our University Technical Assistance Program. Under the supervision of Fraser McLeay, Senior Manager at MWTC, a graduate student in the UM School of Business Administration, will work in the UTAP program providing marketing systems assistance to companies that cannot otherwise afford to develop important marketing foundations. Visit with your local MMEC field engineer to learn more.

*MMEC’s wish for you is a healthy, prosperous new year.*

*Steve Holland, MMEC Director*
DON’T LOOK NOW—
but your bar code is going electronic!

By Mark Shyne,
MMEC Field Engineer

An emerging technology that all Montana manufacturers should be aware of is RFID, an acronym for radio frequency identification, the “successor to bar codes” according to some industry experts. On paper, RFID could revolutionize the way business is done not only between businesses but eventually between businesses and consumers.

When implemented, RFID consists of a series of hardware and software components that are designed to work together as an identification and/or tracking system. Each is chosen based upon the application at hand, considering the various conditions present that would affect reading the tags. For example; cows, pallets, cases and ocean-going containers would have different requirements to be considered when designing an RFID system.

The RFID tags (or semiconductor chips) are super thin, so they can be built right into thin labels that can be applied using automated equipment. They are designed and selected based upon the following attributes:

**Power Source** Active tags contain a battery, and passive tags using radio energy from a reader to generate power for sending responses to an inquiry.

**Frequency** Ultra high frequency (UHF), high frequency (HF), low frequency (LF) or microwave (MW), each used in different conditions, for example, moisture and humidity of the environment and product, metal packaging present, etc.

**Antenna** Small conductors that are attached to the chips to send and receive communications from a reader.

**Encoding method** Tags can be factory encoded as read only, write once/read many, or read/write depending on the application. Reusable totes in the chemical industry might use read/write so that each time the tote leaves the building, the tag can be updated with information specific to that shipment. Case or pallet labels might be read only, since they are sent with an outbound shipment to a customer, and are not intended to be re-used.

Another component is the RFID reader, which broadcasts a radio wave signal and is capable of reading many tags simultaneously. Readers can be mobile or fixed—to a doorway or beside a conveyor line, for example, based on the application at hand.

Preparing for RFID implementation. Automating supply chain functions is in the works at Walmart, Target and Albertsons, to name a few. Some actually have mandates that their largest suppliers must meet in year 2005. And even the DOD (Department of Defense) is indicating they will be “early adopters” of the technology.

The efficiencies that RFID will bring are expected to reduce operational costs for the large retailers, and improve the ability to get the right equipment into the war fighters’ hands, at the right time and right place.

So automating product scanning should make RFID simpler to operate than bar-code technology, right? Not so fast; in many ways, the technology’s increased capabilities make it more challenging.

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The fourth annual SBIR conference is designed to further define the SBIR/STTR journey. The event is set for March 29–30 at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, with pre-conference workshops and a networking session on day one and “Charting Your Course to Commercialization” programs for day two. The content has been designed to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the journey that begins with a strategic plan, the development of a commercialization pathway, and a plan to attract risk capital. Day two will include:

- Overviews from federal SBIR program managers and how to cultivate and build relationships, compete and enhance competitiveness.
- Commercialization cycle and how to move a product to market.
- Seasoned SBIR winners about the commercialization strategies they selected.
- Panel of investors on how early-stage innovators secure capital.
- Panel of SBIR winners to share best practice tips on governmental accounting.
- Panel of professionals discussing experiences working with universities and federal labs.

Cost for the pre-conference licensing workshop is $75, and the general SBIR workshop is $25. The full-day on Commercialization is $125. Register before March 21 and receive a discount. For more information or to register, contact Linda Brander, 406-841-2749, lbrander@state.mt.us, or visit http://sbir.state.mt.us/SBIR_Agenda0329.asp
Tom Spika from the entrepreneurial and growing contract manufacturing company Spika Welding & Manufacturing, near Moccasin, Montana, attended Compete Smart to rally with peers and allies in Bozeman this fall.

At the conclusion of the event, hosted by the Montana Manufacturing Center especially for companies across Montana, Spika gave a wrap-up on the two-days of activities and had this to say:

Q.: You went on the local manufacturing plant tours in conjunction with the conference. What was your impression?

A.: I strongly encourage them for next time. It is very interesting to see what is built by other firms right here in Montana and how they go about it. And it is quite conceivable that there could be a “beneficial business interaction” between some of them and your company. The companies we toured each had remarkable stories of benefits they have derived directly related to MMEC involvement in their companies. They were quite impressive. (Ed. Note: Tours were taken at Big Sky Laser, Simms Fishing Products and Gibson Guitar.)

Q.: Was the keynote address “Make Some Noise: The Rise, Fall & Rise of Harley Davidson” what you expected?

A.: Pete Smith, a fellow member of the Central Montana Manufacturing Alliance from HCR Inc., had heard Ken Schmidt before and highly recommended his talk. I now see why. This was an excellent choice for speaking to this group. Everyone came away with something.

Q.: Breakout sessions are offered during the conference; the 2004 sessions focused on innovation and product development, techniques for daily business management and teaming up for high performance. Did you attend, and did they hit the mark?

A.: These are excellent opportunities to educate ourselves. The conference has great topics — very pertinent and applicable to the manufacturing environment. Well presented, especially in the short time frames. The people presenting are great resources here to help us, too.

Q.: Three successful Montana companies are featured in a plenary session on Day 2. Is this a valued piece of the conference?

A.: These talks were very inspirational. Hearing from the Simms Fishing Products leadership, NorthWinds Publishing & Printing general manager, and, of course, from Sandra at Precision Lift, a company I collaborate with, tells us that small business in Montana can succeed.

Here are some of the things we learned:

There will be adversity; it can be overcome; it can be instrumental in our growth and ultimate profitability; and we can never be content with

Think About it!

“You can’t build a reputation on what you’re going to do.”

— Henry Ford
Semitool Strides Toward World Class... (continued from page 1)

for planning, R&D, production, and testing. The cycle from sale to
delivery can take a number of weeks,
and the units cost hundreds of thou-
sands to several million dollars.

Semitool is both a technology com-
pany and equipment manufacturer.
It employs about 700 people in
Kalispell and Libby and has several
hundred field staff involved in sales
and support throughout the world.

“Our technology is doing amazing
things. Because we sell our tech-
nology in the form of a product
we understand the need to be a
World Class Manufacturer to move
that technology,” said Operations
Manager Jim Wright.

Already world class in appearance,
with clean, well-lit, nicely displayed
manufacturing and R&D facilities,
Semitool is accelerating its goal
by implementing Internet-based
communications tools for both pro-
duction and analysis. The company
has also been formalizing its quality
management systems for several
years with help from the Montana
Manufacturing Extension Center;
audits by a professional Registrar for
compliance to the ISO 9001:2000
standard were underway in early
December. Wright, who came on
board last year, is putting corre-
sponding ISO data collection detail
to work as business indicators that
will increase the company’s ability to
respond to varying customer needs
and changing market conditions.

Monte McAlmond, a 19-year vet-
eran with the company, has been a
key part of adopting ISO standards,
Wright said. “He has kept the
flame lit during downturns and
kept us moving forward with it.
ISO is an important subset of being
World Class.”

Communication
across departments
and in the field is also
important, especially
in an innovative solu-
tions-oriented com-
pany like Semitool.
Shortly after arriving,
Wright instituted a
company-wide action
and information
database. It is used to
track the status of the
units during produc-
tion and is Web-based
for real-time access
even off site. Wright
admits to encoun-
tering resistance to
using the database at
first. “Now there is
huge support inside
the company. One
reason is that within
a day issues are
addressed, and we
commit to a date for delivery. Sales
staff can access the database via
the Web to give customers updates
on the progress of their order.
Everyone sees the real value in that.”

To put it into perspective, he
explained that overseas business
communications are traditionally
complicated by significant time dif-
fences. “They call and we’re not
in; we call, and they’re not in. Using
the production database, we can see
what is on the floor, what is sched-
uled, and what issues pose a risk on
the delivery date so we can alleviate
them. It helps managers prioritize.”

The business indicators Wright is
using to drive improvements are

1) Customer Satisfaction Survey
2) Field Non-conformance
3) Manufacturing Non-conformance: FRACAS
4) Cycle Time from Order to
Customer Signoff
5) Shop Order Revision Tracking

The systems, he said, measure “how
we’re doing over time” and are set
up to answer, “Are we improving
over time?”

The indicators help identify root
causes that can be managed, isolat-
ing mishaps, examining how suppli-
ers and customers are treated, etc.
The data receives a Pareto analysis
to spot trends. The outcome is
data-driven management decisions.
When Semitool was founded 25
years ago, it had only a few competi-
tors; now there are more than 40,
making it more critical that the com-
pany stay at the top of its game.

The customer survey is an excellent
example of the how Semitool sets
performance measures and goals
and takes action for continuous
improvement.

Think About it!

“The voyage
of discovery
is not
in seeking
new landscp
e but in having
new eyes.”

— Marcel Proust

www.followyourdreams.com
The focus on customers in the ISO 9001:2000 standard revived and improved the Semitool Customer Satisfaction Survey with various departments reviewing the instrument. It now contains 87 questions specific to tool users for gaining feedback on support services and features which the company then analyzes. It is hand delivered to customers and uses a rating scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the best. “The number of responses was very high, 33 percent,” according to Mike Kellenberger, training and documents manager in Corporate Customer Service; “a response rate of 6 or 7 percent is considered the average.”

The Semitool goal is to address any measure with an average greater than 2.5. In its first round of use, the survey revealed a spare parts issue when asking if parts were “right on arrival.” By asking detailed questions about whether parts are being identified clearly, reaching the right personnel, and then rating the level of support during normal hours and after hours, the company can more clearly identify the root cause when a part or support is not meeting expectations.

A second flag was an interesting cultural difference that Semitool is now addressing. “We learned that upper level leadership was perceived as not spending enough time in Asia, based on responses from that area; so our COO scheduled more visits to those customers,” Kellenberger said. “Face time is valued by upper management there — it’s a cultural thing.”

Because Semitool equipment requires an extremely clean environment (eg: lint and fingerprint free), a third action that resulted from survey analysis was implementation.

Semitool Celebrates ISO Certification

KALISPELL — Dec. 31, 2004 Semitool received its ISO 9001:2000 Certification, recommended by the American International Registrar Corp., after an intensive eight-day audit of its quality systems found only four minor non-conformances. Montana Manufacturing Extension Center assisted the company with implementation over a two-year period with extensive training, pre-assessment, simulated audits, and helping interpret the standards to the specific Semitool operation.

“We worked very hard to build documentation that was specific and meaningful to the company and its continuous improvement efforts,” said Todd Daniels, lead MMEC engineer for the project.

“Todd and Kreg [Worrest] have been awesome,” Semitool Operations Manager Jim Wright said. “This has truly been ownership of the project on Todd’s part from the beginning. He paid really close attention to every detail. He knows the people and culture, which means he knew what buttons to push to get people on board for ISO. The ISO project has directed us in how to do improvements that will be important to bottom line profitability. The people are excited about confirmation on what they are doing. They have a lot of pride in this company.”

Two long-time Semitool managers who were very involved in the implementation said it has helped very independent, focused groups get together, understanding each other’s needs and issues.

“Todd and Jim got us to work together cross-departmentally, which says a lot,” noted Materials Manager Monte McAlmond. “Very independent people work here; we’re used to addressing challenges by going over, under, or through to get to a solution. ISO brings everything together; unifies it across departments. ISO is a means to capture change and be sure we are continuously improving. The corrective action documentation was important.”

McAlmond also noted that the MMEC pre-assessment findings were valuable in getting ready for final audit. “Todd and Kreg were sounding boards; they helped us define and interpret procedures in the ISO standard to our system. We valued the expertise and experienced coaches to get us through the process.”

Kim Shiflett, Sub-assembly Production Manager, values the quality system, noting, “Especially knowing it put systems in the areas that support me. It’s a good set of checks and balances for the great things we do— because of all that we do, we need to have checks in place.”

A MAR
YOUR CALENDAR

✦ AS9100 Internal Auditor Training
   March 1–4 Missoula
   March 5–6 Bozeman
✦ “Play the Lean Game”
   April 5, Bozeman
   April 6, Bozeman
✦ Check our Web site Scheduled Training for more details.

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More than 200 people rally with... (continued from page 5)

being “good enough,” whether talking quality, productivity or innovation.

We learned that behind every success story is a strong leader, one who understands the value and contributions of each individual in the company; one who embraces challenges and adversity and uses them to emerge even stronger; one who has a passion and an unwavering belief in his or her product and people; and one who has a commitment to growing the economy in Montana.

We also learned that we have, and we are, what should be the envy of America! We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. We enjoy a lifestyle second to none and have at our disposal a skilled, talented, motivated and ethical workforce.

Q.: What do you see in the future for Montana companies?
A.: The entire world can be our customer, and the greatest part is we have the MMEC giving their all to help us succeed. All we have to do is ask.

Whether it’s an MMEC field engineer or their partnering resources like Marti Elder and Paul Hutter (and others who taught the breakouts), they’re all here to help you solve your problems, to make you more competitive and more profitable. They are our greatest resource — and far too under-utilized by many of us who stand to benefit the most.

From speakers to presenters to organizers, the people at the conference did an outstanding job. You’ve enlightened us, you’ve entertained us, and you’ve motivated us. You’ve given us tools we need to “tune our engines.” I can guarantee that we will be better leaders, better businessmen, and better manufacturers because of these two days, and I look forward to being here again in 2006.

Corvallis Robotics Team’s competition robot visits Compete Smart.

Montana products are showcased around the conference where audience listens attentively to speakers.

Mfg News

Technology Business  Flathead Valley has more than 50 technology-based businesses according to figures kept by Jobs Now, Inc.

Customer Service  ILX Lightwave (www.ilxlightwave.com), Bozeman, and ETSC Technologies Co. (www.etsc-tech.com) have signed an agreement to establish a service center in Wuhan, China, to provide improved customer service for ILX Lightwave’s instrumentation and test system products. The center will provide repair and calibration of ILX instrumentation products and installation and support of its laser diode test systems. ILX is a leader in instrumentation and test systems for photonic component research, development and manufacturing. ETSC, a professional hi-tech distribution company, has been distributing ILX products for five years.

“Moose Drool” Lives On  The famous brown ale from Big Sky Brewing (www.bigskybrew.com) in Missoula will keep its name after an out-of-court settlement in a 9-year-old lawsuit. According to the Missoulian, the lawsuit involved Moosehead Breweries Ltd., a Canadian company concerned over the use of “moose” in the branded Montana beer. The settlement allows Moose Drool to be marketed in a substantial portion of the U.S.
Semitool Strides Toward World Class... (continued from page 7)

of even more stringent “clean” procedures; employees now wipe down tools at every shift change and re-validate cleanliness before shipping, Kellenberger said.

Customers will be surveyed again this spring and responses analyzed.

Another newly launched indicator is the manufacturing non-conformance database: FRACAS (Failure Review Analysis and Corrective Action System.) “It is not fully implemented yet, but I’m very excited about it,” Wright said. “We designed the system to report and act on any non-conformance. Having a database where everyone can log a problem formalizes a non-conformance, allows a fix, and gives us valuable trending data.”

By using FRACAS, management can examine the type of non-conformance, where it’s happening, and frequency of occurrence. Because the system is Web-based, an automated e-mail reminder is triggered for action items when a solution outside the workstation is required.

This closed loop system ensures follow-up. However, management does not want to intervene in every non-conformance, Wright said. A loose wire, for example, does not require a review team solution. A trend of loose wire reports showing up in analysis might.

As success using the manufacturing FRACAS increases, it will be followed with a field version for the sales and support teams to track and act on non-conformances there – again, creating effective, real-time communication and trend data. The result – faster response to customer needs.

“This is valuable input from a quality perspective,” he said.

Wright is also examining several other key measures, cycle time from order to customer signoff and the number of shop order revisions for the various tools ordered by customers.

“Reducing cycle time is especially important due to industry ups and downs – customers need the short-est wait to receive a tool if they order it during a peak and receive it in a downturn, that’s pretty negative impact for the customer,” he said.

Because of the cyclical nature of the industry, overcoming this creates a challenge, as the cycle from sale to delivery takes some time. Customers don’t always know what is needed in the tool, just what they need it to do, he explained. The planned equipment will spend time in R&D and engineering before it goes into production and test. Semitool has set an annual goal of shortening this cycle by 30 percent. Shortening the cycle has great value for the customer and for Semitool.

Using its new Web-based, data collection methods and enhanced quality system, Semitool is better able to meet today’s business challenge of staying profitable while producing and delivering products that keep customers satisfied.

“With our commitment to ISO 9001:2000 certification, ongoing quality improvements will definitely improve market share and bring us business,” he said.


Mfg News cont...

Transport Opportunity As an exporter of food products to Pacific Rim, Pasta Montana LLC (www.pastamontana.com) is looking for a strategic transportation partner. The company ships product by truck to Seattle/Tacoma and then transloads to containers for shipment overseas. It would like to coordinate transportation activity with an importer in Montana to achieve a two-way haul on containers direct, thereby avoiding transload cost and lowering trucking cost. Contact Rita Mee of Pasta Montana, Great Falls, 406-761-1516.

Nation’s Mfg Rebound Slows The Manufacturing Alliance/MAPI Quarterly Economic Forecast predicts real GDP growth to be 3.9% in 2004 and 3.4% in 2005 (down from Aug forecasts); and 3.3% in 2006. Mfg should continue to grow faster than the general economy, with industry production growth expected to go up 5.2% in 2004 and 4.1% in 2005. Computers and electronic products are expected to rise 17.3% in 2004 and 13.7% in 2005. Non-high-tech industry will grow moderately at 4.0% this year and 3.3% in 2005. See www.manufacturersalliance.org. (summary source: NACFAM Weekly)
30th Annual MT Economic Outlook Seminars across Montana

Douglas Young, the state’s leading tax expert and Montana State University professor, will present an overview of Montana’s changing tax structure and options for reform at the 30th Annual Economic Outlook Seminars to be held in nine Montana cities. See www.bber.umt.edu. Each year, the seminar highlights the latest economic trends and what they mean for Montana. For example, Montana avoided the 2001 recession and the economic aftermaths of Sept. 11. Does that mean our economy has become recession proof? Experts from the Bureau of Business & Economic Research (BBER), Montana State University, and the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research will look at trends and outlook for Montana’s important industries: wood products industry, manufacturing, agriculture, health care, and travel/tourism. The closing luncheon program will feature Tina Begay, executive director of American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL). She will discuss dynamics and unique cultural characteristics of American Indians and explain how Montana businesses can best incorporate them into their operations.

OUTLOOK SEMINAR SCHEDULE

First Interstate Bank & BBER Present:

Jan 25, Helena • Great Northern Hotel
Jan 26, Great Falls • Holiday Inn
Jan 28, Missoula • Holiday Inn Parkside
Feb 1, Billings • Northern Hotel
Feb 2, Bozeman • Holiday Inn
Feb 3, Butte • Ramada Inn Copper King
Feb 8, Kalispell • West Coast Kalispell Center Hotel
Mar 8, Sidney • Elk’s Lodge
Mar 9, Miles City • Town & Country Club

Don’t look now...
(continued from page 3)

CHALLENGES

The most basic challenge will be managing the data. Unlike bar-code technology, where information is scanned only when someone passes a printed label in front of a reader, RF scanning is always “looking” for tags in the area. For this reason, RFID systems must filter data that is being captured continuously. Another factor is these systems must contend with physical factors that can interfere with the RFID’s radio waves. Facilities that have electric motors and metal obstructions can have electromagnetic interference. Even the products themselves, such as liquids or metals, may absorb or reflect RF signals.

And the technology is far from mature. Problems are being reported by companies using RFID tags. Tags fail at initial “label” production, as they are being applied to containers, or due to the general wear and tear of the distribution environment. For these reasons, bar coding and RFID are going to need to coexist for quite some time.

So what is the vision for RFID? Consider a trip to your large retailer, say about 6-8 years from now—no waiting in line, because as you roll your cart out, your purchases will be automatically scanned using RF, tabulated by the RFID system host computer, and billed to your account.”

Additional resources

Additional information is available at these Web sites:

www.rfidjournal.com
www.epcglobalinc.com
www.rfidinc.com

And DOD will host a February event in Washington, D.C.:

2005 DOD RFID Summit for Industry
February 9–10, 2005
Washington Hilton & Towers, Washington, DC

If RFID implementation seems right for you as you learn more about it, contact your local MMEC field engineer, www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com
Conference Goers
Rally & Win Prizes!

Last fall, Compete Smart manufacturing conference participants enjoyed a special evening out at Yellowstone Harley-Davidson and returned to the Conference Hall at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman for dessert and special prize drawings. Prizes were donated by Conference exhibitors and many of the companies whose products were displayed in the Montana Showcase during the two-day event. The crowd was entertained by emcee Al Deibert and Stacey Scott from MMEC during the drawings. Below is a list of the generous contributors and the prize winners:

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<th>DONOR</th>
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<th>WINNER</th>
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<td>Alpine Touch</td>
<td>Specialty Spices</td>
<td>Mike Preyer, Woods Pow’r Grip; Charles Nelson, McDantim, Inc.; Tom Spika, Spika Welding &amp; Mfg.</td>
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<td>Associated Employers of MT</td>
<td>Cooler &amp; Pepsi</td>
<td>Shawn Skinner, Felco Industries</td>
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<td>Béquet Confection</td>
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<td>Carmen O’Brien, Advanced Powder Coating</td>
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<td>Marketing Book</td>
<td>Carol Spika, Spika Welding &amp; Mfg.</td>
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<td>Colter Coffee Roasters</td>
<td>1-lb Tin of Coffee</td>
<td>Larry O’Brien, Advanced Powder Coating; Shaun Richenbach, UPS; Pete Smith, HRC, Inc.; Brad Robinson, BBC Dail Rauscher; Mark Clevendine, Mountain Laser; Barry Wood, Woods Pow’r Grip; Kathy Barta, Big Sky Woodcrafters; Dave Weston, TechLink</td>
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<td>Counter Assault</td>
<td>Bear Spray</td>
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<td>Enell</td>
<td>Sports Be &amp; Travel Mug</td>
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<td>Flathead Winery</td>
<td>Cherry &amp; Apple Wine</td>
<td>Gary Bond, Woods Pow’r Grip; Kathy Leahy, James Calhoun Mfg.; Larry Hall, S &amp; E Electronics</td>
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<td>Galusha, Higgins &amp; Galusha</td>
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<td>Leo Zahara, Simms Fishing Products</td>
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<td>Museum Pass</td>
<td>Shawn Pabst, Felco Industries</td>
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<td>Galusha, Higgins &amp; Galusha</td>
<td>Norwegian Lefse</td>
<td>Steve Chambers, Montana Specialty Mills; Bryan Wood, Woods Pow’r Grip</td>
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<td>Mission Mountain Market</td>
<td>MT-made Gift Basket</td>
<td>Linda Harmon, Dawson Community College</td>
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<td>MMEC</td>
<td>Digital Camera</td>
<td>Gene Gilbert, Agro-Enviro Consultants</td>
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<td>MMIS</td>
<td>Museum of Rockies Passes</td>
<td>Dan Fallon, McDantim, Inc.</td>
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<td>Montana Black Gold</td>
<td>Bow Site</td>
<td>Mike Manders, Woods Pow’r Grip</td>
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<td>Montana DBQ</td>
<td>Arrow Rest</td>
<td>Doug Jensen, Payne Financial Group</td>
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<td>Montana DEQ</td>
<td>2-night Stay Heritage Inn</td>
<td>Robert Wichman, Spika Welding</td>
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<td>High-oleic Safflower Oil</td>
<td>Nick Flynn, UPS; Nathan Clevendine, Mountain Laser; Joe Landsverk, Woods Pow’r Grip; Leesa Nopper, Marketing Works</td>
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<td>NorthWestern Energy</td>
<td>Best Western Gift Certificate</td>
<td>Andy Rose, MAMTC—Wyoming</td>
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<td>Mountain Woods</td>
<td>Fiddle-bow Bread Knife</td>
<td>Dean DeCock, TowHaul Corporation</td>
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<td>Quake Industries</td>
<td>Gear Strap &amp; Lens Cap</td>
<td>Bruce Dighans, Air Design; Chuck Wambkele, Ind’l. Automation Consulting; Travis Holland, Western Waterjet Cutting; Joe Papa, Border States Electric</td>
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<td>Simms Fishing Products</td>
<td>Fishing Vest</td>
<td>Mike Baugh, Darcova</td>
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<td>Timeless Traditions</td>
<td>Tear Bottle</td>
<td>Lisa Dighans, Air Design</td>
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<td>UPS</td>
<td>Remote Control Car</td>
<td>Pat Cunningham, Dawson Community College</td>
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<td>Coffee Mug</td>
<td>Evelyn Pyburn, Big Sky Business Journal; rad Wood, Woods Pow’r Grip; Brad Robinson, BBC Dain Rauscher; Gene Gilbert, Agro-Enviro Consultants; Pete Smith, HCR, Inc.</td>
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<td>Hunting Cap Book</td>
<td>Mike Preyer Wood’s Pow’rGrip; Gerald Barta, Big Sky Woodcrafters</td>
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<td>Hurley Chew Toy</td>
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<td>BOMO Bumper Pet Bed</td>
<td>Kathi Montgomery, Montana DEQ</td>
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MMEC Spring Workshops

March 1–3
AS9100 Internal Auditor Training
3-day event sponsored by MADA & MMEC
includes live factory audit experience
Wingate - Missoula

April 5
Lean Manufacturing Workshop/Simulation
1 day, 8am to 5pm
GranTree • Bozeman

April 6
Lean Manufacturing Workshop/Simulation
1 day, 8am to 5pm
GranTree • Bozeman

Register Online:
www.mtmmanufacturingcenter.com/Training/scheduled_training.htm

2005 Other Dates To Remember

February 23–24
2nd Annual Aerospace Technology Conference
MADA • Holiday Inn • Great Falls

March 29–30
4th Annual SBIR Conference:
The SBIR Journey:
Charting a Course for Commercialization
(29th: pre-conference workshops and networking session)
Fairmont Hot Springs

April 12, 13, 14
SBIR, an Investment in Your Company Future
Great Falls • April 12 • 11am to 2pm
Sidney • April 13 • 9am to noon
Billings • April 14 • 9am to noon

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