

PMPA Member Montague Tool and Manufacturing Finds Success in Workholding Innovation and Creativity

Before it was a 60-employee, full-service milling company capable of high-volume production across a number of different industries, Montague Tool and Manufacturing was a modest machine shop run by an owner with a knack for milling ingenuity. Paul Montague, who founded the company in 1943, discovered a way to machine and mill the sights for a Remington shotgun, which paved the way for three generations of milling and workholding creativity. Today, the business is run by Paul Montague's grandson, Joel Montague.

"Innovation in the area of milling and workholding is what we do best," says Scott LaFave, vice president of business at Montague Tool and Manufacturing. "A lot of companies struggle with efficiency because they don't understand workholding. So, we've become this bastion of information on how to properly hold workpieces."

Montague Tool and Manufacturing's initial breakthrough with workholding solutions came when the company's second owner, Jim Montague, had the idea of creating more efficiency by holding multiple parts under a machine spindle. Mr. Montague had the idea to attach the screws to a piston in the manifold and create an automated, multiple-part workholding fixture plate using hydraulics. The Hydraulic Clamping System became the flagship solution for Montague's other company, PAWS Workholding, and allows for maximum density under the spindle, or multiple-part workholding, along with automated clamping to reduce load times and keep spindles turning.

"By making and inventing all these products for customers who need workholding solutions, we don't need another company to build our fixturing for us," Mr. LaFave says. "That has been a huge competitive advantage for us. You can eliminate load times significantly through automated clamping. Getting consistent pressure every time really stabilizes your process, and most manufacturers know how important that is."

While it serves a range of industries with CNC milled products, Montague Tool and Manufacturing's major customers lie in the archery, heavy truck and aerospace markets. Mr. LaFave says it's the company's ability to diversify that allows it to thrive while certain industries are in a decline. For example, when the recession hit in 2008, Montague maintained its success by manufacturing archery and paintball components.



"Because of our workholding efficiency, we've been able to compete globally on heavy truck parts for large companies," Mr. LaFave says. "They can't find anyone else to make them at the price we offer, so we've built a niche to ourselves."

Montague Tool and Manufacturing has been actively involved in PMPA for more than 20 years and is a staple at tech conferences for sharing its workholding expertise. In addition to tech conferences, Mr. LaFave says the company greatly benefits from the listserves and networking opportunities that come with a membership.

"I appreciate the fact that members always care even when they don't know you personally," Mr. LaFave says. "The attitude is, 'if you're struggling, someone is here to help, and there's always a resource.' There is genuine concern for each other's businesses and protecting the industry as a whole."

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