



# Micron Celebrates Receipt of “Nobel Prize of Manufacturing”

Micron Manufacturing Company of Walker, Mich. recently celebrated its receipt of the 2009 Shingo Silver Medallion for Operational Excellence. The Shingo Prize was established in 1988 to promote awareness of lean concepts and to recognize companies that achieve world-class operational excellence.

The award is earned by demonstrating a deep understanding and integration of lean principles, lean systems of management and the application of lean tools and techniques to create a sustainable culture of continuous improvement.

In 2009, only 23 companies received this world-renowned award, dubbed the “Nobel Prize of Manufacturing” by Business Week. Most of these awards have been earned by much larger companies, such as Volvo Construction Equipment and Lockheed Martin. Micron is the smallest company to ever receive the prestigious Shingo Prize.



To celebrate the occasion, Micron invited customers, suppliers and government officials to meet the people responsible for impressing the Shingo Board of Examiners. “Freedom” was the theme that summarized Micron’s award-winning effort. It was chosen to honor Micron’s founder, Ed Preston, who served the United States in World War II. After the war, he developed a vision of economic “freedom” that has benefited many in western Michigan. Machining was his passion and he built the business by creating long-term relationships based on trust.

The September event focused on Micron’s employees. They are the people who understand the opportunity they have and the activities they have to execute to assure that Mr. Preston’s legacy continues to grow. Mr. Preston’s son, sales and general manager Mike Preston,

welcomed the 75-plus guests. He explained that the Micron team looked at the day as not only a celebration of the company’s accomplishment, but also as a celebration of manufacturing in Michigan. He let attendees know that manufacturing jobs remain the backbone of a strong economy.

The younger Mr. Preston explained that Micron has been on the lean journey since 2000, with the goal to be the most efficient company it can be. He also said the award is a reflection on the entire Micron team. He then identified three core improvement areas that drive the company’s efforts: the development of teams, improved inventory turns and better lead time performance.

Since 2000, numerous teams have been developed, resulting in a culture of ownership of ideas and improved morale. Inventory turns

(Continued on next page)

## In This Issue

Micron Celebrates Receipt of “Nobel Prize of Manufacturing”

2009 – Precision Machining Industry Shoots the Rapids

PMPA 2010 Management Update: 5WH

PMPA Calendar



## Micron Celebrates continued

have gone from 9 to 17, while the lead time has improved from 49 to 12 days.

Four guest speakers were on hand to help celebrate the occasion: Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; 76th District State Representative Roy Schmidt; mayor of Walker, Mich. Rob VerHeulen; and Shingo Board of Examiners representative Keith Hornberger. All four speakers praised Micron for its leadership and vision. Secretary Land identified Micron as an inspiration to the entire state, finishing her address by saying, "We need a Micron-type plan for the state of Michigan."

Micron's Lean Champion, Dan Vermeesch, focused on Micron's process of creating a lean culture of excellence. One of the steps he focused on was "management accountability to employees." At that point, Mr. Vermeesch asked that every Micron employee come up to share the stage with him. He then addressed the company's customers, suppliers, the media

and Micron's founder. He informed customers that they could have no better group ensuring that their specifications are met. He told suppliers that the people in front of them would make sure their requirements are clear.

He reported to the media that Micron's employees welcome any well-intentioned visitor to their plant. The crew has been visited by more than 400 people from throughout the country and across the Atlantic, and has assisted those visitors on their lean journeys. Finally, Mr. Vermeesch addressed Micron's founder Ed Preston and his wife Jackie to let them know the employees standing before them are the people that will assure that the Prestons' legacy is honored.

It was an integrated "team huddle" shared with all those who fall under their mission statement: "Micron is passionate about providing leadership to our customers, suppliers and industry in order to enrich the lives of our employees, their families and the community."



Here are the people of Micron who do such a fine job executing the company's mission:

- |                |                 |                |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Edmund Preston | Jackie Preston  | Mike Preston   | Dan Vermeesch    |
| Alex Puff      | Chris Schmidt   | Fran Fannin    | Terry Vanderlaan |
| Andres Barajas | Cuong Duong     | Gordie Beemer  | Tim Klein        |
| Bill Schmidt   | Dan Szczepanski | Howard Junglas | Tony Wright      |
| Bob Zimmer     | Dave Seabrook   | Mike Smith     | Walt Alexander   |
| Brian Hoff     | Dee Malski      | Pedro Parra    | Will Baker       |
| Chad Carroll   | Jim Merrill Jr. | Robin Thomas   | Zache Harry      |