

## Member Profile: Automatic Products Corporation



Automatic Products Corporation (APC) is a leading provider of precision-machined parts produced on automatic screw machines and CNC equipment. The company was founded in 1957 by Charles E. Tedford, who started out with two Brown & Sharpe machines, a small grinder and a milling machine.

In those early days, the Garland, Texas-based company produced parts for submersible pumps, gas regulators and beverage machines. As the company grew, it added more equipment, including Davenport, Acme and Wickman multi-spindle screw machines.

In 1970, APC tripled its space by building a 16,000-square-foot facility next to its old plant. Even after another expansion, the company eventually outgrew that space. So, in 1997, the manufacturer moved into its current 118,000-square-foot headquarters.

With more than 100 employees, APC now serves a variety of markets, including the oil, geophysical, beverage, aircraft and air conditioning industries. The company works with cold-drawn steels, stainless and alloy steels,

Inconel, titanium, aluminum, brass, copper and plastic.

According to Gary Tedford, APC's current president and son of the founder, "Our part sizes range from small pieces that are 1/2-inch long and 1/16 inch in diameter to castings that are 60-inches long, 18 inches in diameter and weigh almost a ton." Most of APC's recent growth is with parts made on CNC equipment. The company also has tremendous capacity for running high volumes of aluminum extrusions.

APC has a strong commitment to quality and continuous improvement. The company is QS9000: ISO9002-certified. It is also a certified "dock-to-stock" supplier for many of its customers.

In 1980, Gary took over as president of APC when his father retired. Gary also served as PMPA president in 1990-1991 when the association was still called the National Screw Machine Products Association. He had previously served as a PMPA trustee and has chaired several committees.

Gary's son, Chris—the third generation of the family—is now vice president and general

manager of the company. "It's very unusual to see three generations in a company," says Gary. "Those father-son deals don't always work. So when they do, it's really special. I was fortunate to work with my dad all those years, and now I get to work with my son. I wouldn't trade that for anything."

APC celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. "We're going to do something to celebrate later this summer," Gary says. "Business is good right now, so we've been very busy. But we'll have a big celebration." This year, the company will also mark its 40th anniversary as a PMPA member.

"We established our roots in the PMPA early on," he continues. It's such a great association—great friends—and it's a wonderful knowledge base. The networking aspect is really important. I've sure enjoyed it."

Gary points out that the PMPA Listserves are used company-wide at APC. "We use it every day," he explains. "It's a great source of knowledge for all of our departments. There's a lot of good information, and it keeps us in the loop. We, as PMPA members, all have the same problems and the same issues.

"It's very comforting to know that I am one phone call or one e-mail away from a knowledge base that has thousands of years of experience," Gary sums up. That, plus all of the friendships we've made through the years make the PMPA very special. You just can't pay for that."

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