

Member Profile: Ray Industries, Inc.

Ray Industries, Inc. specializes in precision thread rolling, as well as precision machining of ballscrews, lead screws, mechanical actuators, worms and threaded fasteners.

Raymond Fish started the company in 1976 with only two thread rolling machines. "I started out doing cold forming of threads on parts supplied by customers," he says. "Over time, a lot of those customers wanted my company to be more involved in the pre-machining and finishing of the parts. That ultimately led us to being a full-service, CNC machine shop with thread rolling capabilities. We can provide the complete part, or we'll do the thread rolling only."

Today, Ray Industries has 25 employees in a 40,000-square-foot facility in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The company recently received its ISO 9001-2000 certification for CNC precision machining and thread rolling.

In addition to its CNC equipment, Ray Industries has multiple-spindle screw machines, subspindle machines, live tooling, shaft machines, two-axis machines, vertical machining centers and turning centers, as well as production mills and saws. "We do just about everything in the plant except heat treating, grinding and plating," Mr. Fish says.

Markets served by Ray Industries include agriculture, computer, construction, energy, fluid power, machine tool, medical, metalworking, mining, petrochemical, printing, textile, transportation and utility. "We make parts for everything from snow blowers and hospital beds to marine outboard engines," says Mr. Fish. "We stay away from parts that can be easily sourced offshore. We prefer to keep the quantity small. A typical job for us might be a thousand pieces."

Not all of the company's customers are OEMs. "We make a lot of parts for other machine shops, including PMPA members that have OEM customers," Mr. Fish explains. "Sometimes I don't even know the identity of the end user of the parts."

Ray Industries can thread roll parts up to 9 inches in diameter and virtually any length. "The only thing that would limit us is the length of the bar," Mr. Fish continues. "Typically, most of our work is 2 inches and less, with 1-inch diameter being the most common size we handle. We also work with a variety of materials. We can roll up to the mid-40s Rockwell C hardness, but our preferred material is 1018."

Ray Industries has been a PMPA member since 1996. "I felt that joining was important for the information that PMPA provides," says Mr. Fish. "Plus, being a member adds some credibility to our machining operation."

Mr. Fish is a big user of the PMPA Listserves. "I read every post that comes through in the Listserve," he says. "I get all of the lists, not just one or two, so I see everything that comes through. It's always educational and often entertaining at the same time. I respond to the Listserve questions that are related to threads because that's my business. For the posts that involve machining, I read the responses in order to educate myself."

Although his official title is president and owner, Mr. Fish also handles his company's accounting, payroll, quoting, writing custom programs for the shop and purchasing. "I just haven't been able to break away and get involved in some of the PMPA activities," he explains. "But I have sent people from my company to attend some of the conferences.

"Being a PMPA member helps my company a lot," Mr. Fish points out. "We incorporate the PMPA logo in all of our forms and sales materials. I'm sure that adds credibility because we get inquiries from people who see that we're a member." He adds, "I really like the PMPA staff. They always offer good commentary on the questions that come up."

Mr. Fish says he plans to participate in the PMPA financial survey soon. "It's on a spreadsheet, and it's easy to do," he says. "I just have to sit down and start plugging in the information. I know that once I do, it's going to pay off for me. I'm always analyzing my company's financial statements, so it will be nice to know how we compare with other companies our size in the industry."

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