

ONTARIO BUSINESS PROFILE



INDUSTRIAL METAL
FABRICATORS
(CHATHAM) LTD.

THE ABILITY TO INNOVATE



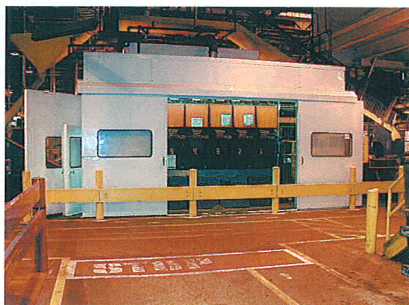


INDUSTRIAL METAL FABRICATORS:

“Ability to innovate”

MORE GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS, INCREASED GLOBAL COMPETITION AND A STRONG CANADIAN DOLLAR ARE FORCING CANADIAN COMPANIES TO FIND WHATEVER MEANS AVAILABLE TO MAKE THEIR OPERATIONS RUN MORE EFFICIENTLY, PRODUCTIVELY AND AT LOWER COSTS. SOLUTIONS TO THEIR CHALLENGES ARE COMING FROM INNOVATIVE COMPANIES THAT HAVE FOUND THEIR NICHE IN THESE LEAN MANUFACTURING TIMES.

Even though the demand for companies offering solutions to assist manufacturers in waste reduction, time and money savings is greater now more than ever, Industrial Metal Fabricators Ltd. in Chatham, Ontario has put in practice its corporate slogan, ‘the ability to innovate’ for many years.



Now celebrating its 50th year in business, the design engineering, fabrication and installation company is instrumental in assisting customers worldwide with problems in dust collection, ventilation, noise control, plant cooling, fume collection systems, pneumatic conveying, food process equipment and custom sheet metal products. Industrial Metal Fabricators’ systems and equipment improve the cleanliness, comfort and safety of a workplace for employees and create efficiencies and reduce labour costs to contribute to a healthier bottom line for companies.

Industrial Metal Fabricators is included in the manufacturing category of Chatham-Kent’s Economic Development Services department, which is the largest single sector of employment

BY CHERYL VIGH

Industrial Metal Fabricators (Chatham) Ltd.



in that region, but it has not faced struggles or bankruptcy as many other companies in that sector have.

“Labour savings are what companies look for nowadays ... if it means finding savings to survive rather than lose the whole factory ... we can meet those needs,” says company vice-president Alan Van Oirschot.

In 2006, 15 manufacturers ended operations in Chatham-Kent, most of which were Tier one and two suppliers to the automotive industry.

“We had a net loss in '06 which means we lost more jobs than were created. 2007 has been a status quo year and we're look-

ing to 2008 picking up again,” says Chatham-Kent business development coordinator Dalila Prizio. She says companies such as Industrial Metal Fabricators with diverse customer or product lines—or both—are faring better.

Specializing in the manufacture of pneumatically based conveying systems for the plastic and paper industries, IMF also services automotive, food and packaging clients throughout Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Europe.

When original owner Lou Marentette started Industrial Sheet Metal Works in 1958, the focus was sheet metal including installation and stainless steel work.

Facing page: Now celebrating its 50th year in business, this design engineering, fabrication and installation company is instrumental in assisting customers worldwide with problems in dust collection, ventilation, noise control, plant cooling, fume collection systems, pneumatic conveying, food process equipment and custom sheet metal products.

Industrial Metal Fabricators has been involved with noise control and acoustical work for the past 25 years with a variety of projects for industrial, commercial and residential applications.

Left: In the area of material separation, IMF offers both the CVS (Combination Vacuum Separator) and ACS (Air Classifier Separator) which remove fines, dust and other foreign material from plastic.

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Industrial Metal Fabricators (Chatham) Ltd.

Frank Van Oirschot became part owner in 1967 and saw the need to diversify. When he became president and owner in 1980, he took the company to a new level by getting more involved with problem solving, offering customers design-build solutions rather than solely responding to their requests.

“Being innovative, solving problems for people is what we pride ourselves in ... we’re unique because others don’t have the ability or engineering background to do this type of work,” says Frank Van Oirschot. For example, over the years IMF has received six patents on innovations that continue to be put into use by companies around the world. “We do a lot of R&D here.”

“It is also education that comes through experience,” adds Frank’s son Alan Van Oirschot. “We’ve tested things in our labs and in the field as to what works and what doesn’t.”

One of Frank Van Oirschot’s inventions is the F.V.O.

Industrial Metal Fabricators has aligned with Donaldson Torit, the world’s largest filtration company, to provide collection units to address employee exposure to dust, mist or fumes.



Adjustable Inline Venturi System, a non-contact mode of transferring products including plastics, aluminum cans, finished products and waste materials. This system works in conjunction with a pressure blower and piping system to effectively convey a variety of materials. For example, in the transfer of Styrofoam beads the venturi system reduces their bulk density, which lowers the cost of material required to make expanded polystyrene. Companies can make a better product in a more economical way.

IMF’s CVS (Combination Vacuum Separator) and ACS (Air Classifier Separator) remove fines, dust and other foreign material from plastic, i.e. labels, ferrous and non-ferrous metals. They regrind the plastic and clean it to a level that allows more material to be reused. Rather than being sent to a landfill, the materials are blended with virgin material and fully recycled. In turn, we are doing our part to keep the Earth from over pollution or helping to keep it “green”.

For dust and mist collection systems, Industrial Metal Fabricators has aligned with Donaldson Torit, the world’s largest filtration company, for 25 years to provide collection units to address employee exposure to dust, mist or fumes.

“We make sure the equipment operator doesn’t breathe that in,” says Alan Van Oirschot. Utilizing the company’s sheet metal roots, IMF’s skilled trades staff design and build systems to accompany the Donaldson Torit units. Licensed sheet metal



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Industrial Metal Fabricators (Chatham) Ltd.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In the workplace, Industrial Metal Fabricators introduces solutions that improve cleanliness, comfort and safety for employees. In the global community, Industrial Metal Fabricators takes an active interest in utilizing its success to help others.

IMF is involved with Canadian Food for Children, an organization that gathers food, clothing and items for needy children in other countries. Locally, IMF supports the Goodfellows organization with many employees participating in the Porchlight Campaign as well as the packing and distribution of food and toys to families in need.

IMF President Frank Van Oirschot has a personal interest in supporting the community, acting as social director for the Chatham-Kent Multiple Sclerosis Society and as a member of the Chatham-Kent Accessibility Committee. In this role he encourages businesses and the general community to assist those with special needs.

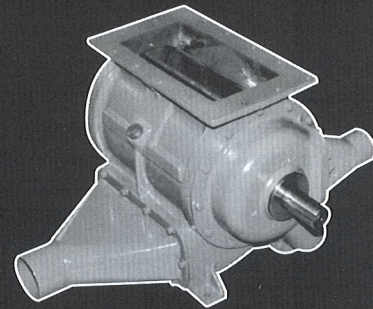
trades people work with state-of-the-art computerized cutting equipment in a 66,000-square-foot manufacturing and warehouse facility on site.

As companies introduce new products or processes they must address ventilation upon installation.

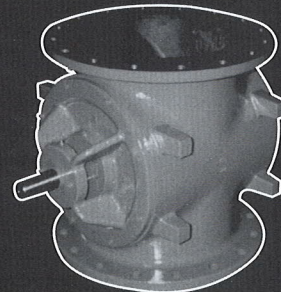
"Sometimes companies face unique ventilation issues and we can develop solutions," he adds. The dirty air is filtered into clean air that goes back into

the plant, preventing pollution, eliminating dangerous exposure and saving on energy costs.

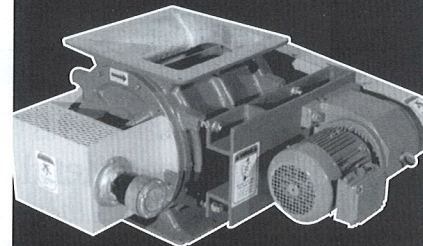
The other aspect of industrial ventilation is keeping people comfortable in workplaces where air conditioning is not available, impractical or cost prohibitive. IMF purchases units from other companies and then designs and builds distribution systems that put them into operation and blanket work areas. These fresh air



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Industrial Metal Fabricators (Chatham) Ltd.

evaporative cooling systems reduce stifling temperatures by as much as 20 degrees dispersing cooler air over a large area. Tap water and a power source are all that is required with these systems as compared to the high costs of air conditioning.

"Plants don't have to have extra relief

staff—we're able to keep people working their whole shift," says Frank Van Oirschot.

Industrial Metal Fabricators has also been involved with noise control and acoustical work for the past 25 years with projects including noise enclosures

for large and small blowers on pneumatic conveying systems, acoustical panels for large electrical transformers for the New York and New England Power Grid and various styles of enclosures for industrial equipment and noise barriers for commercial and residential applications.

"If a plant is close to houses we will silence the fans and exhaust systems coming out," Alan Van Oirschot cites as an example.

Industrial Metal Fabricators provides turnkey systems for customers and has a team of specialized project managers who are individually assigned to build, design and oversee installation and follow-up for a specific system or equipment giving every customer one IMF team member to deal with directly. The company provides fully engineered systems with the engineering team led by James Nicholas, P. Eng., who has worked for IMF for over 15 years.

Industrial Metal Fabricators has enjoyed controlled, steady growth since its beginnings. Looking ahead to the future, the Van Oirschots see further growth potential in plastics separation and acoustical solutions.

"So many products in the world are made of plastic; government regulations are enforcing noise control; these are the areas of future growth that we will focus on," says Alan Van Oirschot.

Whatever the project, creativity is encouraged among employees, resulting in staff loyalty to IMF and to providing the customer with consistent quality and exceptional workmanship.

"We guarantee our work. It's always been my philosophy to make sure I can go back and visit these guys (customers). When I ask how the system's working they say 'no problem' and you know that's going to bring you work again later on and that's the key to it," says Frank Van Oirschot.

Van Oirschot attributes staff loyalty and dedication to success throughout the 50 years Industrial Metal Fabricators has been in business. ▲

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*extends their congratulations to
Industrial Metal Fabricators (Chatham) Ltd.
on their 50th anniversary*

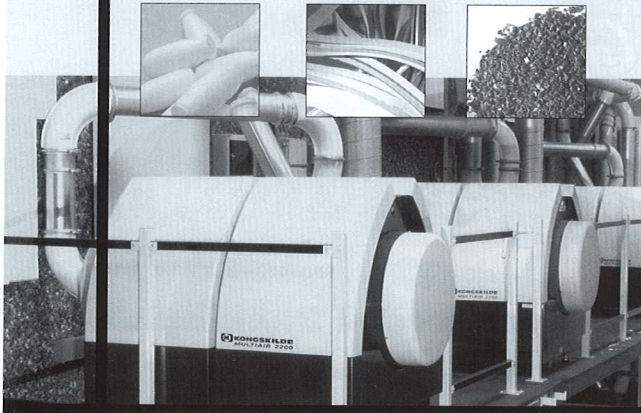
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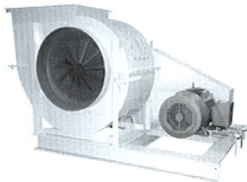


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