# 2022 GRCA Manufacturing Summit Recap

Greater Reading Chamber Alliance (GRCA) held its 2022 Manufacturing Summit on October 26 at Miller Center for the Arts at Reading Area Community College (RACC). The half-day agenda included a Keynote speaker, an expert panel, and a workshop with key takeaway items.

Following opening remarks from RACC President Dr. Susan Looney, GRCA President & CEO Jim Gerlach, and Berks County Commissioner, Christian Leinbach, the event's Keynote Address, "Manufacturing in the Metaverse," was presented by Timothy Simpson, Ph.D., Paul Morrow Professor of Engineering Design & Manufacturing Co-Director, Penn State CIMP-3D, Penn State University.

Simpson told the audience that technological advances only continue to accelerate, making it all the more challenging to keep up and stop on top of everything. He said that, in manufacturing, many argue that we are now in the 4th industrial revolution, or Industry 4.0, as a consequence of advances in autonomy, artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML), the internet of things (IoT), augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), cloud and edge computing, digital twins, etc. Yet most companies are struggling to understand what this means for their business, he said.


*Summit attendees networking in the lobby prior to the event.*


*Keynote Speaker Timothy Simpson introducing his "digital twin."*

After introducing his "digital twin," Simpson explained that consulting companies are pushing blockchain and their version of the future while telecoms are pushing 5G and other advanced wireless connectivity. Bitcoin and NFTs are taking the internet by storm, and everyone seems to be talking about the metaverse now too, he said, be it Meta's (née Facebook's) version or some other immersive online digital environment a la the Matrix or Ready Player One's Oasis. Using additive manufacturing —applying 3-D Printing to "make things out of data" — as an example of the digital transformation that is occurring, Simpson offered his view on how these advances create synergies that will transform manufacturing, production, and supply chains as we know them. As a result, he demonstrated how digitalization will define the 21st century similar to how industrialization shaped the 20th century.

Simpson's address was followed by a panel discussion on "Talent and Attraction," featuring regional manufacturing professionals including Alexia Pursley, Human Resources Manager - Arkema (PANEL FACILITATOR); Heather Hillmann, Human Resources Manager - Unique Snacks; Nate Swartz ECRE, CDR, CSMR, PRC, CIR, Head of Talent Acquisition - Reading Truck; Dayana Blandon, Human Resources Manager - DAK Americas, An Alpek Polyester Business; and Scott Smith, VP-Sr. HR Consultant - Herbein I Mosteller HR Consulting. The panel shared insights and experiences on how organizational culture plays into attracting critical talent and retaining them. In this tough talent environment with low levels of unemployment and the high rates of quitting, the panel members discussed how companies can prevail with positive talent management practices and investment in their organizational culture.


*Panel discussion on "Talent and Attraction."*

Following the panel discussion, Nic Thomas, Development & Consulting - GAGE Personnel, presented a workshop titled, The "BIG PICTURE" of Local Wages: Analysis, Trends, & Pitfalls. Thomas explored the recent explosion of wages over the past two years, as evidenced by data. He explained that GAGE's unique perspective within the staffing industry allows them to see trends that may be used as industry or sector indicators. As we're all forced to navigate a disrupted talent market, it is imperative that we arm ourselves with the best data we have available, in order to act swiftly and accurately, he said, adding, If we do not take action, or ignore the signs, our "talent attraction" issue may quickly become our "talent retention" problem.

A second workshop, PA Playbook for Manufacturing Competitiveness, featured Karen Norheim, President & CEO - American Crane Equipment, and Dan Fogarty, COO - Berks County Workforce Development Board. This presentation provided a brief overview of the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Competitiveness Playbook, which was recently released by the PA Manufacturing Advisory Council. This report identifies three game changers and ten related recommendations to turn around Pennsylvania's economic performance in manufacturing.

Jamey Maack, US Anodize, provided closing comments. This GRCA event was sponsored by American Crane & Equipment Corporation (Platinum Sponsor); East Penn Manufacturing, Levan Machine & Truck Equipment, Reading Truck, and Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (Gold Sponsors); Enterprise System Partners, Inc. (Silver Sponsor) and Penn State Berks (Bronze Sponsor).

# AMERICAN CRANE & EQUIPMENT CORPORATION MERGES TECHNOLOGY WITH OVERHEAD LIFTING, TO ALIGN WITH THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING

**By Quinton Chambers**

Arriving at the great milestone of our 50th anniversary, American Crane and Equipment Corporation has continued to solidify itself as the overhead lifting company, most respected for its products and people. For 50 years we have supported industries crucial to the advancement and safety of our nation, including critical manufacturing, the nuclear industry, the US military, and aerospace. Along the way we have gained more knowledge and refined our process. Recently, we have unveiled our innovation lab, where we are actively integrating the technology of the future with our overhead lifting capabilities; our first step forward came when we discovered how to leverage the Internet of Things (IoT) with our new Smart Crane System.

What is the IoT? In simple terms, it's an extension of internet and network connections to different sensors and devices embedded within industrial equipment and machinery. And its use is on the rise. According to the most recent MHI Annual Industry Report, IoT solutions are currently deployed by 21% of material handling equipment owners and are poised to be adopted by 80% of them within the next five years. Further, the report found that 45% of those surveyed believe IoT has the potential to disrupt the industry in a positive way or create a competitive advantage among those who use it; 39% say IoT supports ongoing operational improvements.


To support and utilize those findings, our ACECO Smart Crane System is designed and engineered to support real-time, wireless IoT communication with overhead handling equipment. This enhanced data exchange allows overhead handling equipment owners and operators to gain access to a variety of information about their systems, and to benefit from:

- Detailed remote monitoring information about travel, lift, and speeds; load weights; limit states; amperage ranges; and drive fault status.
- Collection and analysis of long-term, historic usage data for comparison and evaluation of trends in the Cloud.
- Detection of, and alerts about, unsafe conditions.
- Alerts to key personnel with event-based notifications via email or text when a predetermined threshold has been reached.
- More accurate timing for scheduling predictive and preventive maintenance or repairs based on actual usage.

Customizable and scalable, the ACECO Smart Crane System can be provided with a new crane system or retrofitted into existing equipment. Its system architecture interfaces with any crane system equipped with variable frequency drives (VFDs) for motor control and can be integrated with nearly any sensor embedded within the overhead equipment system.

Data collected by American Crane's IoT Smart Crane System can be accessed in a centralized dashboard by both local and remote users via web browser or app. The Cloud-based dashboard offers graphical chart and table views of a broad range of data points. These include determination of Crane Manufacturer's Association of America (CMAA) usage-based service classification (Class A-F); monitoring and more accurate predictions of component life spans based on speed, run time, and loading; precise scheduling of preventive maintenance and repair based on actual usage; trends in operation and function; and access to crane-specific design documentation, inspection reports, and user manuals.

Additionally, application of the ACECO IoT offerings is not limited to overhead lifting. Our MHIoT (Machine Health IoT) device can also be utilized to monitor the operation and health of other pieces of critical industrial equipment. The MHIoT device monitors and trends current, temperature and vibration levels, which allows users to gain real time and historical data on the performance of other machinery within their facilities via a convenient remote user interface. This data can be used to identify and create actionable insights pertaining to the health of the machinery, with the goal of decreasing or eliminating potential down time via the proactive planning & implementation of maintenance and repair activities.

Our cleanroom hoists and cranes are engineered to lift and lower materials and goods safely and efficiently without introducing contaminants into the space. We manufacture them in various designs and configurations to suit different situations, such as satellite and semiconductor manufacturing operations. Our standard clean room hoist and crane offerings are available with load capacities to suit the application. Additionally, we can design, engineer, and fabricate custom material handling or overhead lifting solutions to meet highly specific or unique customer requirements. We also offer inspection, testing, repair, rebuilding, and upgrading services.

As we make strides towards a prosperous and innovative future, we are proud to announce that we have been certified as both a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and as a Small Business Administration's Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of women-owned businesses has been steadily on the rise, with the most recent figures from 2020 finding that 20.9% (1.2 million) of American companies were owned by women.

Too often, women are not aware of the opportunities available in manufacturing. There is, however, a significant overlap between what women want in careers and the attributes of careers in manufacturing today. To those wanting to enter our field, join us! There is exciting work to be done and a path that still needs paving for the future generations of women.

Being a certified WBE/WOSB enables our customers in government entities and private industry to formally acknowledge their partnership with American Crane, not only as a leading supplier of innovative overhead handling solutions but also as an indicator of their increased commitment to engaging a diverse supplier base. By partnering with a forward-thinking, evolving organization that has valued and prioritized inclusion, diversity, and innovation within our operations for 50 years, our customers—both existing and new—will continue to benefit from our creative solutions.

For additional information, please visit www.americancrane.com.


# Reppert's Candy Growing

Reppert's Candy grew last year with the help of Longacre Electric and Victory Bank. They installed new machines and have expanded their workforce. This will allow them to expand their wholesale offerings and they now sell their product in 40 USA states wholesale. They are currently looking at greatly expanding their current business into a national supplier for finished Chocolates.

Reppert's Candy recently expanded its manufacturing with a new German chocolate molding line. The new equipment arrived this summer from Germany and Italy after a delay due to Covid. This manufacturing will take place in Oley and will be only high-quality chocolates. Operating out of a 12,000 square foot facility in Oley Township, Reppert's Candy offers more than 65 varieties of candy and approximately 200 different style chocolate molds.

Have one those "hard to please" people on your gift list? A box of assorted chocolates is a perfect gift that is sure to please anyone! Valentine's Day and Reppert's Candy are a perfect match! As you walk through the doors of their retail store, you will be pleasantly overwhelmed by the sweet aroma of chocolate. As you walk further into the store, the enormous variety of chocolate candies, Valentine's treats, not to mention the beautifully detailed packaging, will certainly overwhelm all of your senses.

Reppert's also offers custom chocolates for your wedding favors and gifts for the wedding party, bride or even the groom. Reppert's can offer custom molds, custom packaging and plenty of options. Call them so they can learn how to make your special day even sweeter. You can reach them at 610.689.9200 or email: info@reppertscandy.com.


Reppert's Candy is located at 2708 W. Philadelphia Ave., Oley, PA 19547. They would love to have you stop in to check out their new candies and their new look. For additional information, please visit: www.reppertscandy.com.


Other Retailers with Reppert's Candy include: Coventry Parlor at Laurel Locks, Inc.; Pottstown Memorial Medical Center; Professional Pharmacy Pennsburg; Professional Pharmacy Pottstown; S.Clyde Weaver; Dutch Valley Food Distributors; and Patsy's Potpourri of Gifts, 30 E. Philadelphia Ave, Boyertown.

# We're Growing. Join Our Team.

Reading Bakery Systems is a world-leading manufacturer of bakery and snack food equipment. Our reputation is built on innovation, quality, and manufacturing excellence. We are hiring in our engineering, manufacturing, and technical service groups. Connect with us to learn more about our open positions, comprehensive benefits, and collaborative work environment. We invite you to join the RBS family.

**Apply today at readingbakery.com.**

READING BAKERY SYSTEMS

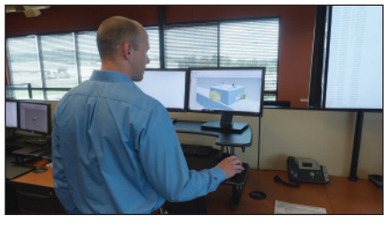
A Markel Food Group Company

## Reading Bakery Systems

Get to know Reading Bakery Systems. With global headquarters and primary manufacturing facilities in Robesonia, this unassuming neighbor of yours is known worldwide as the leading manufacturer of innovative bakery and snack equipment solutions.

RBS was originally founded as Reading Pretzel Machinery (RPM) by Edwin Groff in West Reading in 1947. Edwin and the RPM team designed, built, sold and serviced the first automated pretzel forming machines. Realizing the larger quantity need of snack makers, Groff designed an integrated baking system that could efficiently and effectively handle much larger volumes of snack product.

Edwin's son Terry joined the company in 1974. Together, the Groff's helped shape the future of the food manufacturing industry while establishing the company as a global brand. Terry led a culture of integrity, creativity, and innovation that developed numerous inventions like the first stainless steel-lined ovens and a twisting die for braided pretzels. That culture still exists today.

For more than a century, innovation has been in our DNA and our business has thrived because of our relentless pursuit of ways to improve the mixing and baking systems that make our customers successful.

RBS is more than just a leading snack food equipment manufacturer. We are a business that builds strong and lasting relationships with employees, communities, and customers alike. Partnership, collaboration, empowerment, and shared success make Reading Bakery Systems not only a great place to work, but a great place to build a career.

If you are looking for a new challenge, a better work environment or want to be part of a culture built on performance, then RBS is for you. Connect with us to learn more about our compensation and benefits, growth opportunities as well as positive, and fun workplace environment. Come and join the growing Reading Bakery Systems Family. To learn more about RBS and our employment opportunities visit www.readingbakery.com.

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