

SPRING SPIRIT

Tech Center Working To Make It All Come Together

The ability to develop great engineering ideas is part of what makes Paulstra such a strong company. But even the best ideas don't bring rewards if they can't actually be implemented. Many manufacturers find themselves sitting on exciting ideas that sound great but don't work in mass production.

The mission of the Paulstra Tech Center is to make sure that our great ideas become great projects and great products.

That process starts with one of the most basic steps — good communication. We are working to improve the interdepartmental dialogue at the

earliest stages of our projects. Development, industrialization and production need to be on the same page as a project gets rolling. The Tech Center is in the best position to put processes in place to make sure that happens.

Another crucial role for the Tech Center is to think from the customer's perspective: What concept would really result in the best possible product to meet the customer's needs?



Wolfgang Bors

Within the next year or two, the Tech Center staff intends to have made major progress toward this goal. We know we are not there yet, and that there is much work to be done. We also know that success in the effort is crucial, because the ability to work together effectively in creating customer value

will separate successful suppliers from unsuccessful ones in the emerging market.

We look forward to showing even stronger results in the near future.

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Progress On Safety, But There's Still Work To Do

According to some measures, our company's performance in the area of worker safety is improving.

But according to other measures, it is not, which shows us that we still have work to do in a category where we can never regard our performance as "good enough."

Our lost-time accident ratio is improved from 2005, although one of the two injuries that have occurred will require surgery. So we still have serious issues with which to concern ourselves.

But our total reportable injury rate, which includes all injuries that

involve more than mere first aid, is slightly worse than in 2005. The numbers are not significantly worse, but we want them getting better, so we want to re-emphasize the need for everyone to keep an eye out, work cautiously and to alert supervisors if you see something that requires attention.



There's no easier way to help save a life.

Give Blood on September 29

You might think chances are you will never need to receive a blood transfusion. In fact, chances are you will. Overwhelmingly.

According to the American Red Cross, 95 percent of all people who live to be 75 or older will need a blood transfusion at some point in their lifetimes. And in the past few years, with disasters in our nation ranging from 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina, we have experienced more need and more severe shortages than ever before.

As a company, we intend to do our part by sponsor-

ing a blood drive on September 29, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Superior Conference Room downstairs.

Although we have encouraged advance sign-ups, there is still room for more donors to sign up. Michigan Blood Center, which is running the blood drive, will certainly do everything possible to accommodate all those who want to give.

The process is simple. Once you sign in, you will have a mini-health checkup and answer a few questions, after which you will simply lay back and

wait while donating a pint of blood by way of a process that — aside from a brief prick at the beginning — is virtually painless.

Indeed, the process is very painless compared to that of having cancer, heart disease, leukemia, sickle cell anemia or a great many other conditions that make people most likely to need blood.

New mothers also need blood often, and since we all have mothers, we should be able to relate to that. During our first blood drive, we had 24 donors. Let's top that mark!



AGORA 3.1 Prototype Installed

We are already an international company in many ways, but we can always get better at it.

One way of doing that is to make our information system more seamless, and that is now closer to happening as a result of the latest progress toward our AGORA 3.1 information system.

AGORA 3.1 will allow us

to share files more easily with our international colleagues, just as we do today within our local facilities. This will save significant time and effort locating and sending each other files back and forth — just one more way of making Paulstra a more efficient company.

The prototype for AGORA 3.1 has now been

installed, with tryouts and training set for October 16.

Dave Blissett, who serves as the leader of the AGORA 3.1 implementation team, said the system will make documentation sharing with our European facilities as easy as sharing between offices across the hall here at Paulstra.

A Swift Start: \$1.5 Million in Savings

Every element of Paulstra CRC has been working hard for more than a year on the Swift-Le initiative, and much has been written about it in this newsletter.

As we now move to Phase III, titled “Value Stream Management,” we realize, of course, that when we put this much emphasis on the importance of an initiative, people will naturally expect to see significant results from the effort.

So we thought you would like to know about the early returns:

To date, Paulstra has saved \$1,579,601 as a result of the Swift-Le initiative.

We have been at a crucial stage in the effort since spring, when the company itself took over management of Swift-Le from the consultants who served us so well in helping us to conceive, launch and implement the process.

It's up to us now, and that's why we're excited to be able to show such savings in the early going. It shows that Swift-Le works,



is worthwhile and is the priority we need to continue embracing as we move into the future.

But exactly *how* has Swift-Le saved us so much money?

The five teams—ITTA, Communication and Change Management, Supply Based Management, Planning & Logistics and CORE II — have worked exceedingly hard, both together and individually, to make improvements and improve processes.

Recently we conducted 5S Work Sessions with all three shifts working in the AR9 & G1A cells. Both teams were successful in cleaning up the work ar-

reas, reducing waste and improving the productivity. All three shifts worked together to develop a floor layout that everyone was happy with which resulted in less walking & less waiting. There was a sense of pride and achievement that everyone should be proud of.

We have a long way to go on our Lean Journey, but we can think of more than 1.5 million reasons to think it will be a success. Thanks for the work thus far, and let's keep at it!



'We have started our Lean journey, and have a long way to go, but together we can be successful in the marketplace.'

- Kevin Curtis

PAULSTRA ON THE ROAD

Lambda Molding Cell Heats Up Savings for GM

The Lambda molding cell established in 2005 for several 2007 General Motors models began shipping product to the customer in August.

But it began saving the customer money long before

that — when the project team implemented capital-saving and time-saving features like induction heating.

“We’re talking 90-to-97 percent utili-



zation on 15 straight shifts during the week, so we have to find efficiencies,” said Chad Fair, who served as the project team leader for the molding cell. “We’re challenging a lot of our practices in order to make that happen. Some ideas still hold true, but we’re finding some new niches and new

ways to reduce costs and time.”

The cell is handling automated cementing, as well as molding and subas-

sembly, for the 2007 GMC Acadia, Saturn Outlook and Buick Enclave.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia, Saturn Outlook

Summer Events are Highlights for Paulstra Employees

It would have been a shame to waste an entire summer indoors here at Paulstra - and while we certainly worked hard, the people of Paulstra had a lot of fun as well during the summer of 2006.

Some of the highlights included:

- A mid-June golf outing in Cadillac, which was won by Lloyd LaFave, Craig LaFave, Tom Hubbard and Bruce Wiltzer.
- Not to be outdone, an August golf outing in Grand Rapids, which was won by Rich Foer-

ster, Larry Bass, Nick Stadler and Kyle Carlson.

- A company picnic at John Ball Park for the Grand Rapids crew, with great food, a prize drawing and a softball game.
- An equally fun and well-attended picnic in Cadillac.
- A very active YMCA basketball league featuring a good number of our employees — not outdoors, but still great summer fun. One was captained by Brian Wuesten and the other by Emanuel Martin.



Our workforce is a very hardworking one. We are glad it is also a group that takes time for fun, and enjoys good times together.