

Treating their employees as surgeons

Marshall's Tenneco plant gives its workers the tools to be successful

By JOHN HENDLER
News Editor

In the first of an ongoing series for 2010, the *advisor & chronicle* highlights businesses that are expected to play key roles in the Marshall area's economic recovery

Randy Rial, the plant manager for Tenneco in Marshall the past six years, recalls the day when a light "went on" in his head in late 2008 when it appeared that the global economic downturn was beginning to let its presence be felt.

"People were scared; they were wondering if we were going to go under because many companies were going Chapter 11," said Rial. "At one of our employee meetings, I said, 'People, you and I don't control anything that happens outside of this room. We don't control what happens in Washington, we don't control what happens in Europe. What we do control is everything inside these four walls.' And it clicked with them and they realized that their destiny and their future is in their hands and to me, that was the biggest 'ah-ha' moment

that we've had since I've been in this facility."

Since that time, Rial has said the engagement level at Tenneco amongst employees has improved.

"We have a tremendous workforce here," he said. "Hardworking, honest good people."

Tenneco, on its Website, www.tenneco.com, calls themselves one of the world's leading designers, manufacturers and distributors of emission control and ride control products and systems for the automotive original equipment market and the after market.

The success the Marshall facility has enjoyed recently, said Rial, can be attributed directly to the 370-member workforce.

"The only people who make money for this company are the people out on the floor," he said. "I don't make any money for this company."

With the workforce held in such high regard, Rial said it's vital to put them in a position that will allow them to be as successful as possible.

He said one of the most important improvements implemented at the plant in early 2009 was a system where certain workers would make regular deliveries of tools and materials to employee workstations to help them get their work done in a more efficient manner.

"We want to treat our employees like surgeons," he said. "They should have the tools they need, the training they need and whatever materials they need to do their job effectively. And if we're doing that and we're treating them with respect and dignity and we are supporting them with learning and training, then they are going to be successful."

Rial added that most improvements to the Industrial Rd. facility take the worker into account, including break rooms at both ends of the plant.

"When we improved the plant, we wanted to do a lot of things for our employees," he said. "This way, our workers don't spend five minutes walking to the break room."

That emphasis on the well-being of its employees, said Rial, is what helped Tenneco in 2009, have their best year since his arrival.

"I don't know how other successful companies operate," he said. "What I know is how I like to be treated and I want to treat other people with respect and dignity and we have tried to do that in every way possible here."

On the back of each worker's badge is Tenneco's mission statement and Rial



New energy-efficient lighting, whose intensity will not erode over time, has begun replacing the old bell-shaped lighting, which loses 50-percent of its intensity in the first 18 months of use.

said that whereas some companies have statements that are "frothy" and do not make sense, Tenneco's mission is well-defined.

"Delighting our customers is number one," he said. "Because, if you don't delight your customers, you aren't going to have any. That means quality focus and that means on-time delivery."

Another part of the mission statement is the adoption of technology driven global manufacturing.

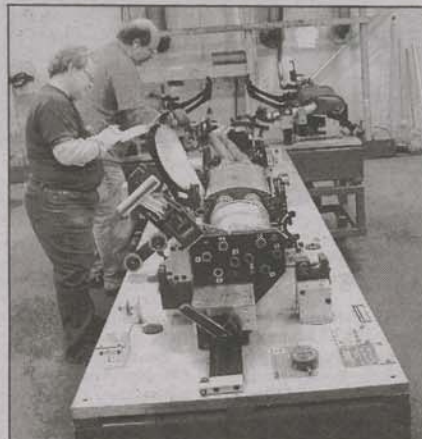
"That means we use technology that's appropriate," said Rial. "That doesn't mean we have the best technology, but we employ the right technology for our business. We don't try to over invest in technology for the sake of technology."

Not surprising, shared leadership through employee involvement also makes up the mission statement.

"That is huge for us," said Rial. "We're going to soon have a metric that is going to measure employee involvement so that we can share with our people. We have first responders. We have a safety committee. We have a peer review committee, where if someone gets in trouble they can take to a group of their peers to get a fair trial versus just having a manager sitting around writing them up."

Basically, Rial said, the company practices what it preaches.

"Tenneco lives its mission statement," he said. "I think that is really huge. We live the mission statement and we are connected from the CEO to the general operator. We all have the same metrics. So, there is alignment throughout the organization



Workers at the Tenneco plant in Marshall are treated "like surgeons," said Plant Manager Randy Rial. "They should have the tools they need, the training they need and whatever materials they need to do their job effectively."

on what's important." With the global economic downturn leading to a rough first half of 2009, Rial said that the third and fourth quarters saw the company's

profits begin to rise. "When Chrysler and GM went through restructuring, they were down, what, 8-10 weeks last summer," said

CONTINUED, page 47

Cost-Effective Statewide Coverage

MPA
MICHIGAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
Michigan Press Association
827 N. Washington Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906-5199
Phone: 517.372.2424
Fax: 517.372.2429
MichiganPress.org
Mi-Dan@michiganpress.org

Place your 2x2 display ad and reach over 3.5 million readers for just \$999! Place a 25-word classified ad and reach over 4 million readers for just \$299! Contact this newspaper or Michigan Press Association.

STOP LEG CRAMPS BEFORE THEY STOP YOU.

Calcet[®] is designed to help stop low calcium leg cramps. Just ask your pharmacist.

- Helps fight leg cramps
- For those with milk allergies
- Fights osteoporosis

Petite Tablet with More Calcium & Vitamin D3

Calcet[®] Dual Calcium + Vitamin D3

MANUFACTURER'S COUPON EXPIRES 1/11/10

HEATER SALE! 45% OFF

Infrared Miracle Heater
CUT YOUR HEATING BILLS UP TO 50%
Heat up to 1000 sq. ft. for Pennies a day

Was \$499 • Cannot start fires • Full factory warranty
Now Only \$279 • Safe around kids & pets • Money Back Guarantee

1-877-497-4427
Must Mention Goupon Code 6566
Call Now, Supplies Limited

THE WORLD DEMANDS ENERGY. YOU DEMAND THE BEST.

For over 80 years, Halliburton has been setting the standard as a leading provider of products and services to the petroleum and energy industries. Currently, we have the following position available in our Duncan, Oklahoma location.

Operator Assistants

It is a little bit physical. It is a little bit technical. It is very hands-on. This entry level position works at the field well-site a majority of the time, with time spent on the road to and from well-site and at the field camp training and prepping also. You will also assist during rigging-up and rigging-down of fracturing service equipment on work locations.

A H.S. diploma or equivalent, Class 1 Drivers License or the ability to obtain one and a good driving record are required. The ability to communicate effectively, promote safety awareness and environmental consciousness, and ensure HSE compliance is a must.

Halliburton offers a competitive salary and benefits package, a challenging work environment and countless pathways for professional growth. Please apply online at:

www.HALLIBURTON.jobs

HALLIBURTON

Is your credit in the toilet?

We can flush it out for you!

Albion Motors 1401 N. Eaton St., Albion
CALL 517-629-2400 TODAY!

SAVE ON YOUR AUTO & HOME INSURANCE...

Tom McKenney (269) 781-2849

*Your Marshall FB Agent

Located on Michigan Ave. (Across from Boshears Ford)

*FARM BUSINESS LIFE COMMERCIAL

If you have your personal auto and homeowners insurance with us, both policies will cost you less. Exclusively for Michigan drivers and homeowners... from Farm Bureau Insurance. Call now.

Making Your Future More Predictable

FARM BUREAU INSURANCE
FARM BUREAU MUTUAL • FARM BUREAU LIFE • FARM BUREAU GENERAL

www.faribureausurance-mi.com



New break rooms, like the one shown here, were added at each end of Tenneco's facility. "This way, our workers don't spend five minutes walking to the break room," said Plant Manger Randy Rial.

Rial. "When they were down, we were down. We had a rolling layoff starting in Dec. 2008 to size ourselves down. We had mandatory rolling layoffs for all salaried personnel, so I got to take a week off without pay... We flexed our operation. If volume was at 100-percent with 300 people, volume at 60-percent was with 180."

Becoming more efficient and reducing waste, said Rial, is what helped the company turn the corner.

What might strike some as going against conventional wisdom, Rial added that Tenneco tends not to focus on productivity, but rather "continuous improvement."

"If you're taking waste out of the system, productivity is a natural result," he said. "If you're improving safety, if you're improving quality by reducing scrap and re-work, productivity naturally goes up."

It's that one item at a time mentality that has helped Tenneco, said Rial.

"Since 2003, the TCR-Total Case Rate (recordable injuries) has been reduced by 56-percent," he said. "Our parts per million (defects) has improved 77-percent; scrap has been reduced by 54-percent and productivity is up 26.7-percent."

Narrowing the focus to just one thing, said Rial, is what has helped Tenneco stay successful.

"Historically, people would say 'work harder,'" he said. "Instead of working harder, let's work smarter. What we want to do is focus on the waste: In our BOS - Business Operating System,

the first thing we do is a trend to see if we are going in the right direction or the wrong direction. If I'm going in a bad direction and not meeting my target, I break it down, because what I'm trying to do is narrow this down to one thing I can fix. This is very difficult for a lot of managers; they want to fix everything, but if you don't focus on your biggest opportunity, you're not going to make the biggest impact."

Rial said that many joke that Tenneco is "focused on

the negative."

"We always focus on what's not working," he said. "It can be frustrating at times, but the end result is that we've had our best year ever in this plant."

Which brings everything back to the employees.

"I asked our workers how many people does it take to run this place," said Rial. "And they said, 'every one of us.' And I said that's exactly right, because nobody knows their job the way they know it."

Albion Library Local History Room hours told

ALBION - The Local History Room at the Albion District Library now has expanded hours: Sunday and Monday 1-5 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., and Thursday 3-8 p.m.

The Local History Room has an extensive obituary file, family files and photographs for over 2500 local families, and a very large photograph collection of Albion area businesses, organizations and events. Genealogists will find reference material and research aids that will be very useful in researching their family histories.

During 2010, library staff members are offering a workshop series entitled *Preserving Your Family Memories*. Six workshops will be presented to help collect, organize, preserve, and share your precious family memories.

The first workshop, *Scrapbooking: Getting Started*, is Thursday, Jan-

uary 14, 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Naomi Lane Room. Michelle Mueller is the instructor.

This workshop will cover materials that are available, how to collect and organize photos, memorabilia, etc., and how to begin a scrapbook project. Bring photos, clippings, memorabilia, etc. that you want to put in a scrapbook. Bring a project you have already started or other scrapbooking materials from home. Some materials will be available for purchase at the workshop.

Other workshops in the series are:

- Taking Better Family Photographs, Thursday, March 18, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Scrapbooking: Creative Journaling, Thursday May 13, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Piles to Files: Getting Organized, Thursday, July 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Scrapbooking: Creative Layouts, Thursday, September 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Scrapbooking: Making Heritage Gifts, Thursday, Nov. 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Plan a visit soon to see what the Local History Room has to offer. Contact local historian Mary Houghton at history@albionlibrary.org

The Albion District Library is at 501 S. Superior St. in downtown Albion. Call 517-629-3993 or visit www.albionlibrary.org

RAISE CASH, FAST!
Sell items you no longer need with an a&c READER AD!
Call Us at 781-5444

Segal to hold event on Jan. 12 to help unemployed residents

State Representative Kate Segal (D-Battle Creek) will host an event on Tuesday, Jan. 12, to help unemployed residents apply for the benefits they deserve and solve any problems they are having receiving them.

"With the sustained high unemployment in Michigan, the state system to accept applications and distribute unemployment checks has been severely strained," Segal said. "Many people are experiencing difficulties getting their benefits through the Unemployment Insurance Agency, accessing their account information, or just talking to a human. I'm bringing in some unemployment specialists so residents can talk face to face with them to get answers to their questions."

Staff from the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) will be available to assist people through the application process or answer any questions one on one.

The event is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at the Michigan Works! Employment Resource Center, Meeting Room C, 135

Hamblin Ave. in Battle Creek.

Calhoun County citizens can contact Segal for more information by calling toll-free (888) DIST-062 or by

e-mailing her at katesegal@house.mi.gov. They can also visit her Web site at RepSegal.com to learn more about her work and sign up for her e-newsletter.

Stop in to Marshall's Hometown Complete Automotive Service & Repair Shop.

FOUNTAIN AUTOMOTIVE CENTER, LLC

BRAD BANFIELD, BRANDON BANFIELD and CHRIS SANDERS are looking forward to helping you with all your vehicle needs.

Don't forget our ...

\$19.95 OIL CHANGE

Includes a 15 point inspection and a courtesy vacuum of your interior.

220 WEST MICHIGAN MARSHALL, MI 269-781-9030

Crossroads Pet Care

Vacationing?... Gone for a day?
Call me to care for your special pet in the comfort of your home.

Sylvia Bunn
781-3332
References Available
Bonded and Insured

5th Line Wellness

Heidi Klein-Line
toetheline@msn.com
269-781-6863 • 269-924-9823

Winter Schedule 2010

Gyrokinesis	Pilates
Monday 6-7 pm	Monday 7:15-8:15 pm
Tuesday 6-7 pm	Tuesday 4:45-5:45 pm
Wednesday 7:15-8:15 pm	Wednesday 6-7 pm

Please call or email with class preference to secure your space.

Private and diet sessions are available for Gyrotonic Tower, Pilates Reformer, Gyrokinesis and Pilates lessons.

Classes start the week of January 11 and will run thru March 29. Spring Session will meet for weeks April 12 - June 7.

Dave Deppe

Window Repair and Restoration

Deppe Enterprises LLC

Phone
269-781-8020
Cell 269-274-4735

Call now to discuss how economical it can be to weatherproof your existing windows and doors for immediate energy savings.

- Custom wood storm windows
- Door and window weatherstrip retrofits
- Small repairs to complete restorations

LAW OFFICE OF CINDY L. THOMAS

Wills • Trusts • Powers of Attorney

Who will make medical decisions on your behalf should you become incapacitated?
Who will manage your financial affairs if you are unable to do so?
Who will inherit your assets if you die without a will?

An effective estate plan can protect your assets, ensure your wishes are carried out and provide for those you love after you're gone. Our team has the experience and dedication to partner with you in developing an estate plan designed to meet your needs and provide you with peace of mind.

Call Today

VISA MasterCard

Oak Ridge Office Park
395 South Shore Drive, Suite 204
Battle Creek, Michigan 49014

269-964-5080