

THE BOULEVARD

DaimlerChrysler Kokomo Casting Plant



*Spring Ahead
Kokomo Casting
Gets New Clock System*

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A MATTER OF TIME

The passage of time is a fickle thing in manufacturing. If you are running a machine and all is well, the day may pass quickly. Yet if you're working on a project, or repairing a machine and you're working "against the clock" time can be fleeting or conversely stand still. It becomes a matter of perspective. Looking up on the wall at the old clocks would usually frustrate your day.

On good days you didn't worry about time, but the rough days were a different matter. You look at the old clock on the wall and it rarely moved. If it did move, the time is that of some distant land, while moving row to row was like changing time zones. And just a second ago you could have sworn the minute hand moved backward!

You weren't dreaming.

The old clock system we had in the plant was moth-balled by NASA sometime in the 60's. They keep them now in their museum. The running joke at NASA was they could never sync a launch. Here is one reason why. Our old system sent out a 48 volt DC pulse every 58 seconds. It took two seconds to get the whole plant to click. Then, every 58 minutes, it would send a reverse pulse to sync itself, and as you may well have guessed, that stopped years ago.

The new system we have was negotiated for in the last contract by the Union, and is **Made in America!** This small company whose home is in St. Charles, Missouri builds and assembles most of the clocks.



NEW CLOCK PROJECT ELECTRICIANS

Terry Miller
Skip Wells
Barrett Wells
Steve Walker
Rick Dickey
Dan Dykhoff
Dustin Smith
Kevin McNeely
Shawn France



They employ 12 people on average and craft every clock by hand from stamping the metal housing to soldering the Texas Instruments chipsets onto the boards. Their customers range from DaimlerChrysler to the US military.

Aside from being made in America these are some of the most accurate clocks in the world. All of our clocks are synced by a Global Positioning System via satellite from an atomic clock on earth. Clocks are networked to the GPS server in our plant.

They need no power pack or plug. Because they are dedicated to the server, they receive their juice by POE – Power Over Ethernet!

The electricians have hung at least 10,000 feet, and probably more of network cable. The response from the floor is overwhelmingly positive. The electricians have been stopped several times and asked, "When do we get one for our wall?" Not only are the clocks being hung everywhere, but they are also upgradeable as well. New clocks can be added to the server relatively easily, and scrolling marquees can be hung underneath.

So now when you look to the wall for that final hour to come, at least you'll know it's accurate, and not just a matter of time.

By: Kit Wessendorf

