

Orlando Jobshop Looks to Future & Expands Finishing Operations

Small business owners have lots of faith. Without it, many would never have the courage to take the steps that can lead to successful growth.

Managing a shop that has been operating in Orlando, FL, for 19 years, Rick Hunter, CEF, owner and president of A.M. Metal Finishing, Inc., has faith in the surface finishing business. Despite the pressure of environmental compliance issues and the uncertainty of the economy, Hunter made an investment in the future of the operation. The shop is now capable of significantly expanding production, if the customers are out there.

It took a lot of planning and two full years of hard work, but Rick Hunter and his staff completed the relocation and expansion of A.M. Metal Finishing in December 2000. The expansion required an investment of more than \$1 million in equipment. Getting the shop set up and the move completed almost turned into a full-time job in itself.

On February 28, 2001, Hunter and staff showcased the new facility to customers and others with an open house at the new location on Chancellor Drive in Orlando. The new shop is four times larger than the former location. The process lines, quality



New business on the block: the new location of the Orlando jobshop is in an established industrial park.

control and workflow have undergone significant improvements.

Anodizing Operations

A.M. Metal Finishing specializes in anodizing. The shop offers hardcoat anodizing in gray or black, and conventional anodizing in clear and 19 different colors.

The most significant change in the operation is in the anodizing lines. At the former location, the lines featured 8-ft tanks. At the new location, Hunter added a new line with 16-ft tanks. "That opens a whole new base of customers for us," Hunter said. "We're looking for companies that have the need to anodize larger parts than we were capable of handling before." The bigger tanks also give the shop the ability to finish a lot more parts in less time.

A large amount of the anodizing work is completed for military applications, Hunter said. The company has been finishing for Lockheed Martin for the past 19 years. Currently, about half of the shop's total production is for military applications, with half for industrial.

Powder Coating

Hunter also increased powder coating operations at the new facility. The powder booth requires hand application, but with a new design, additional production space,

and the cure oven adjacent to the racking operations and powder booth, the production cycle is much faster.

Hunter believes this part of the business will be the fastest-growing, because there are no environmental issues involved with the process, and the powder finish is superior to other conventional coatings. Powder-coated finishes are used in a wide range of industries.

The shop offers custom applications in any color, along with sand blasting and other conventional pretreatments for parts, such as chromate conversion. Powder processes are offered in thermoset epoxy, polyester and polymer coatings.

The shop also offers electropolishing for stainless steel and aluminum, as well as passivation of stainless steel.

Specialty Processes

A.M. Metal Finishing offers a number of special processes for its customers. The company can provide Teflon® coating, passivation in 4-ft tanks, turco cleaning and abrasive blasting with various mediums.

The company also performs selective masking on parts requiring areas to be protected from the coating, as well as humidity and salt-spray chambers for accelerated corrosion testing.

Waste Treatment

All of the processes used at A.M. Metal Finishing can be processed with conventional waste treatment technology and sent to the local publicly-owned treatment works (POTW). "We purposely stay away from any



This new 16-ft anodizing line has increased production capabilities for A.M. Metal Finishing.

surface treatment that has a high pollution factor,” Hunter said. “Everything we do is safe for the environment.” Just to make sure, however, Hunter has installed a permanent holding tank around the entire waste treatment area, in case an accidental spill should occur. For safety reasons, the retention area was built large enough to hold more than the waste treatment tanks.