

Aurora Firm Leads with High Tech Engineering

Name the Aurora firm whose products are used not just locally, nationally or globally, but literally across the galaxy. Think race cars, military aircraft, and spacecraft. The products made by Aurora Bearing Company are racing at Indy, flying missions over Iraq, roving the surface of Mars, and flying with the Cassini spacecraft as it studies Saturn's rings and its moon, Titan.

Aurora Bearing, founded in 1971 by a group of area bearing people, is the undisputed leader in the field of rod end and spherical bearings. Through the years, the company has been recognized world wide for producing high quality and reliable products. The products manufactured are used in almost every industry where motion-transfer is needed.

Within its facilities in Aurora and Montgomery, Aurora Bearing serves virtually every market area including textile and packaging machinery, machine tools, business machines, recreation and exercise equipment, agricultural and off-highway vehicles, commercial transportation and high performance racing vehicles.

"We specialize in spherical and rod end bearings, which are not the rolling element group like ball and roller bearings," explains Charles Richard, President. "Ours are self-aligning, primarily used for oscillatory motion and some rotational motion." Whether the application is mundane or extremely sophisticated, the company has the technical personnel, modern manufacturing facilities, and test and measurement equipment to meet the requirements of the customer.

One intriguing specialty is the theme park business where the company's bearings are used in applications such as animatronics. "If you go to a Disney theme park and see a figure that moves such as a dinosaur, it's using our products." The heavy cylinders that move the cars in the Earthquake ride at Universal Studios are another example.

Although the company originally concentrated its efforts on serving the industrial and commercial fields, it broadened its scope to serve the high profile military and aerospace

market from kit planes to commercial and military aircraft up to and including the world's most visible space programs.

"Our products are riding around the surface of Mars today in rovers, named "Spirit" and "Opportunity". We are on the Cassini probe orbiting Saturn. The space station uses a lot of our products. The F-16 and F-22, as well as the new F-35 fighter jets operate with custom engineered Aurora Bearing products. Boeing and Airbus are customers. In fact, our products are used anyplace you can



Aurora Bearing Company has been recognized worldwide for producing high quality and reliable products. Headquartered at 970 S. Lake Street, the company employs 200 people operating out of two facilities.

industries.

For Richard, some of the most interesting applications are in aircraft. Aurora Bearing first made its foray into the aircraft/aerospace market in 1985. Since then, the company has manufactured PTFE lined and unlined rod ends and spherical bearings along with PTFE lined bushings for all phases of the

think of where things need to move."

The new Boeing 787 aircraft has bearings developed and tested specifically for it by the engineers at Aurora Bearing. And notably, the company is involved in designing and manufacturing the landing gear bearings for the Airbus A380, the largest aircraft in the world, according to Richard.

“We’re developing bearings with the military for the new F-35 fighter and we provide the design and manufacture of products that are used in Army, Marine, Air Force and Naval operations around the world,” he said. The company becomes closely involved in the design process of a new aircraft, and then manufactures the custom parts once production begins. It also is in the business of keeping older aircraft airborne by providing replacement parts and helping to retrofit new technologies into older planes.

Utilizing its growing expertise in the aerospace market, Aurora Bearing Company developed a series of rod end and spherical bearings for the serious needs of the racing community. The Performance Racing series of rod ends and spherical bearings uses materials developed for military and aircraft applications. Superior engineering, advanced materials and precision manufacturing all contribute to high strength bearings essential for modern racing suspensions.

In addition to offering a complete line of standard rod end and spherical bearings, the company designs and manufactures products to meet a wide variety of applications requiring custom engineered units and material.

“We are an engineered products company,” emphasized Richard. The majority of the two million-plus pieces manufactured annually have been designed by the firm’s engineers for specific usage within a particular application. The engineering department is renowned for problem-solving expertise.

“We currently have five engineers, with most specializing in either mechanical or aeronautical engineering, and we will be growing. Our products require a lot of design engineering work,” said Richard. The engineering staff is part of a 200 person workforce operating out of two facilities. Aurora Bearing maintains a world wide sales force that is available to assist and provide its customers with practical and sound solutions to rod end and spherical bearing application problems and challenges.

All Aurora Bearing executives and employees continue to follow the company’s original philosophy to furnish high quality and reliable products while providing prompt delivery and service with a personal touch. The firm also is focused on keeping as much as possible of its manufacturing and processing in the United States.

“We do some purchasing offshore, but 90% of our processing dollars are

spent here in the U.S. So many companies can’t do that anymore and are being forced by competition to go offshore,” laments Richard. It is one reason the firm is so pleased to support the Seize the Future initiative.

“We do believe in Aurora and we believe that Aurora’s future is tied to Seize the Future. We want this city to be the place to be and for people to feel good about Aurora. We want more businesses here. The more businesses that locate in Aurora the more choices you have in terms of skilled labor. That’s what Seize the Future is about, making Aurora attractive.

“We’re proud to be part of the Aurora scene. Our employees are all from the local area and we use a lot of suppliers in the area, so we feel that being in the Aurora area is a large part of our success.

“The people that make up Aurora Bearing are Aurora people,” notes Richard proudly.

TICKLER FILE . . .

Tea Room at Westfield Shoppingtown Fox Valley Ranked Best in State

Savannah’s Restaurant, located in Westfield Shoppingtown Fox Valley between Sears and Carson Pirie Scott, has been named Top-rated in Illinois for its Afternoon Tea Service, by Adagio Teas, a national directory of establishments providing Tea Service.

It is a place unlike any other in the Fox Valley—set in the romantic, dreamy ambience of a Southern mansion, filled with delectable treats. A formal tea is served on a three-tiered tray bedecked with finger sandwiches, each one offering an extraordinary blend of tastes and scrumptious desserts.

Reservations are recommended but not required; call (630) 499-7600. For more information, visit the Web site at www.savannahsrestaurantcafe.com.