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January 2022

**NEE** NEW ENGLAND  
ELECTROPOLISHING

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**2022 Company Spotlight**  
Year in Review

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COVER PHOTO : **NEW ENGLAND ELECTROPOLISHING** | Danvers, MA

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And just like that, 2021 is over. Holy smokes.

How did the year turn out for you? What did you learn? What are you carrying over into 2022? And, on the flipside, what are you hoping to simply leave in 2021? There are some that will tell you not to dwell on the past because it can't be changed. And while they're not entirely wrong, we'd be remiss not to understand from the lessons that came our way in the year that was. It can help inform a better path forward. We asked some of these questions to some of the folks you'll find with ads in the pages of this magazine. We were genuinely curious about what you took from the experience of 2021 and how you'll apply it to 2022. You'll find the product of those conversations in this magazine. Maybe it'll help you frame up your own study related to your manufacturing business and processes moving forward.

We also have a fantastic company profile on New England Electro polishing to start the new year. Nothing like adding a little sheen to a new calendar year, right! These folks are great, so do check it out.

We hope the holidays treated you well, and that you're back to the grind and excited about the prospect of a fresh set of downs. Something about a new year brings with it fresh perspective and renewed optimism. Hang on to that. Having a positive attitude can reap great benefit on the productivity of your operation.

If you haven't had your company profiled in the Gateway yet, let's set the course to make that happen this year? Sound good? Reach out. Until then, keep up the good work.

Happy New Year from The Gateway Crew!

THE  
**Gateway**  
MAGAZINE

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January 2022

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## TDF METAL FINISHING: 40+ YEARS OF METAL FINISHING



**The story of New England Electropolishing begins with a chemical salesman named Alvin Almeida, who saw an opportunity in the marketplace and seized it. In the 1980's Alvin was selling chemicals to metal finishing companies and noticed that they could not achieve consistent results on smaller parts. In 1985, Al started the company with his wife, Jeannine, working by his side. Now under the leadership of their children Amy Prigmore and Luke Almeida, New England Electropolishing has become one of the leading electropolishing companies in the country.**



*NEE founder Alvin Almeida, center, in 2018 with his children and today's company leaders, CEO Amy Almeida Prigmore and COO Luke Almeida.*

New England Electropolishing is one of the few metal finishers in the U.S. to concentrate exclusively on precision stainless steel electropolishing. Electropolishing is an electrochemical process sometimes referred to as “reverse plating,” which removes material at a controlled rate to help restore the natural corrosion resistance of stainless steel. Electropolishing also improves the surface finish of parts, enhances aesthetics, and makes products easier to clean and sterilize.

Electropolishing has become a critical step in the manufacturing process for the medical field, aerospace, food manufacturing, semi-conductors, scientific laboratories, and other industries that demand a tight tolerance on parts.

New England Electropolishing takes pride in their ability to turn parts around quickly. Since electropolishing is often one of the last steps in the manufacturing process, manufacturers need their parts in a timely and efficient manner. New England Electropolishing has a large capacity facility with a reliable staff of about 35 employees to ensure quick and consistent turnaround times for their customers.

“Most of our clients are behind schedule before their parts even hit our loading docks. Because of our capacity, expertise, and flexibility, we can turn parts around in 24 hours without any sacrifice to our high-quality standards,” says Luke Almeida, VP of Business Development

Manufacturers don’t just need a quick turnaround time; however, they need reliable and repeatable quality control as well. That is where New England Electropolishing really shines. They employ highly controlled processes that ensure material removal is precise and repeatable every time. The key to their consistency and reliability stems from their

longstanding operations manager, Imad Jaber, and quality control manager, Erica Bert.

“Electropolishing is a science and art,” says Jaber. “By combining both we are able to meet exact finishing requirements, whether you need one part or 100,000.”

New England Electropolishing is one of the few metal finishers concentrating exclusively on stainless steel, and because their electropolishing lines and processes are validated by third party audits from organizations like ISO and ASTM, New England Electropolishing has become a leader in medical device electropolishing.



The company made an early commitment to having its process registered to third party certified Quality System. The management team at the time worked hard to earn the certification and in 1996 became one of the first metal finishers in the United States to achieve ISO 9001 registration. The company is now ISO 9001, ISO 13485, and ITAR certified.

“We have validated lines which are required by our medical customers, so we put ourselves through validation studies. It is a significant point of pride for our company, so much so we keep the original certificate as a reminder of the achievement,” says CEO Amy Prigmore.

Another defining characteristic of New England Electropolishing is their strong commitment to customer service. At NEE, you can always get an owner or manager on the phone. They honor their commitments, and quotes are handled and processed in under 24 hours. In 2020, the company took its commitment even further and developed the “Customer Support Squad” which comprises a team whose job is to ensure a smooth experience from your first call to the delivery of your product.



“New England Electropolishing is built on responsiveness, a commitment to customer satisfaction, and respect for all of our hardworking employees,” Amy says. “These are the values our father instilled in our family, and these are the values our team works to honor.”

Lauri, of High Purity Piping Company concurs. “Doing business with New England Electropolishing is easy,” she says. “They always provide quick turn around on quote requests and work very hard to meet our delivery requirements once an order is placed. NEE is very accommodating to special requests. Our relationship with New England Electropolishing is a key component to our continued success in meeting and exceeding our customers’ expectations.”

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Fax: 508.673.5252  
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[MORE FROM NEW ENGLAND ELECTROPOLISHING](#)

One thing that strikes us about New England Electropolishing here at the Gateway is the care they put into their website. Along with videos they have a blog that gives further insight into their industry and operative processes. As an example, here's an example:

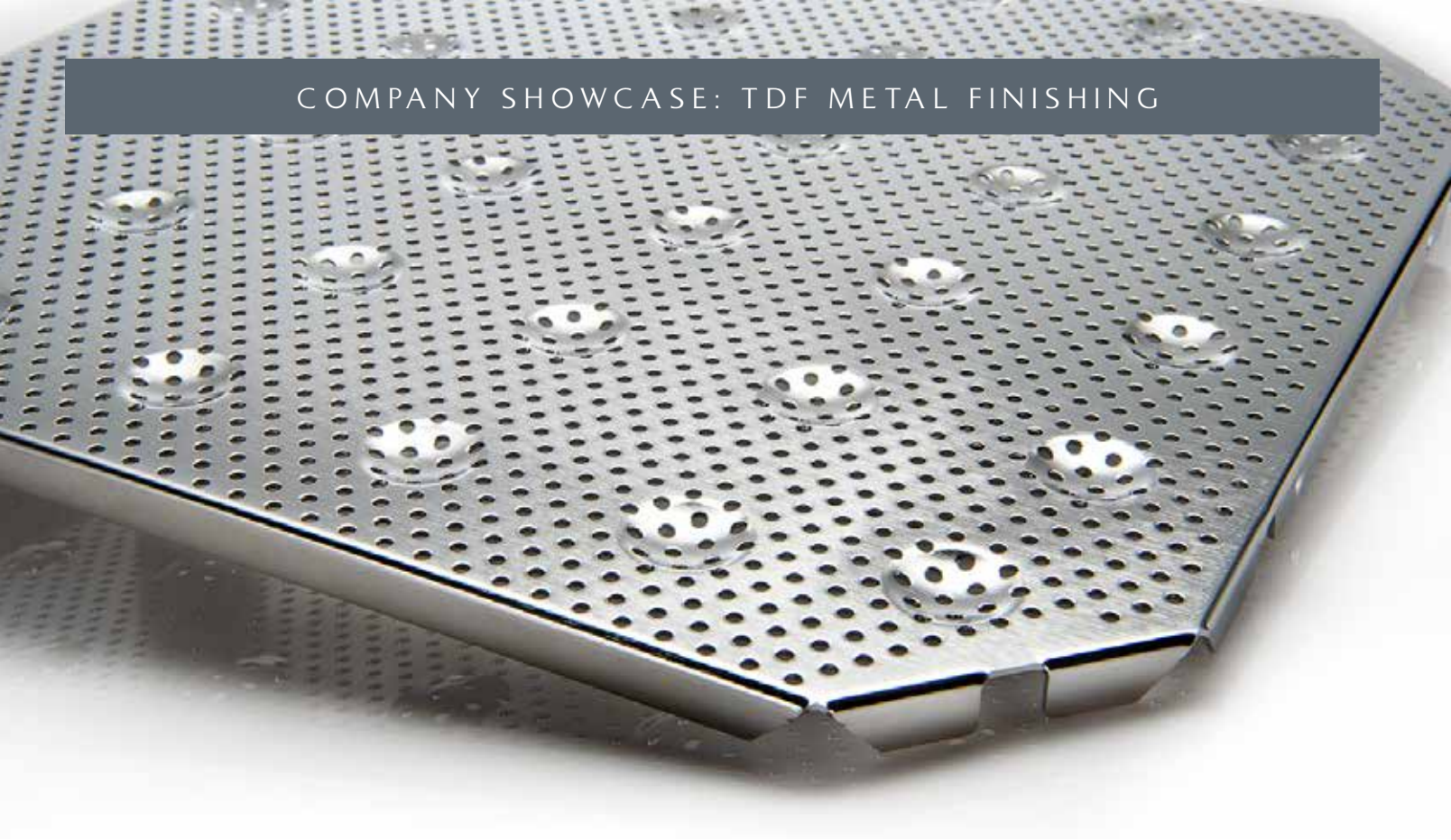
**How Much Material Does Electropolishing Remove?**

Customers often ask us, how much material does electropolishing remove? Electropolishing, when done properly is a highly controllable process, which removes as little as .0001" per surface or .0002" total material. Material removal can be increased by adding more time and/or direct current to the process. Electropolishing will typically remove between .0002" to .0003" per surface depending on a part's size and square footage.

There are many variables involved in the electropolishing process such as time, amperage, bath temperature, bath chemistry, and specific gravity. New England Electropolishing has tightly controlled processes for thousands of parts that yield consistent repeatable results on each order.

Removal rates are generally very consistent assuming parts have the same starting thickness. Edges and radius generally have slightly more material removal as they are higher current areas. This is often a plus as burrs and high points will be brought down and removed. Additionally, the surface roughness of parts (Ra, RMS) will be reduced as more material is removed. On average, the surface roughness of parts can be reduced between 25-35% assuming a moderate amount of material removal.





Many of the parts we electropolish for the medical industry have strict tolerances. These are often critical components to a device where form, fit and function are essential. In these instances, NEE will measure parts before and during processing to ensure product consistency. Records are kept with each job order. Additionally, we can share removal data with our customers to maintain transparency and confirm results.

NEE often develops electropolishing processes for customers through product sampling. We often will provide customers with multiple groups of samples with different removal rates. Once we receive positive feedback, the electropolishing process will be locked in our ERP system for future orders.

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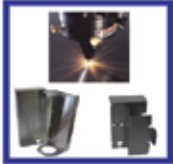
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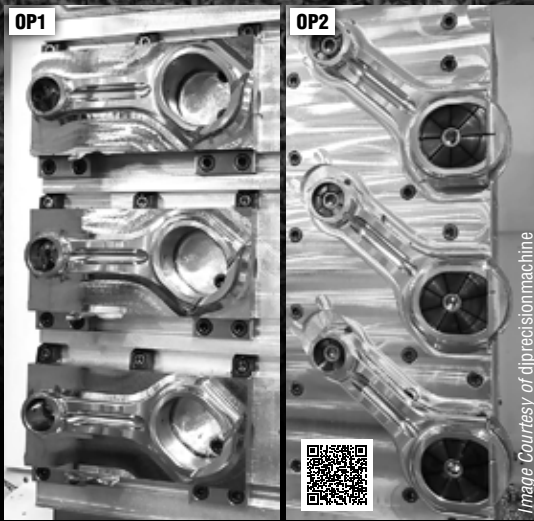


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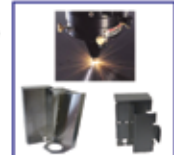
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## GATEWAY MAGAZINE COMMUNITY SOUND OFF ON 2021, AND HOPES FOR WHAT 2022 HAS IN STORE

At the start of the month, we sent around a brief list of questions to our esteemed pool of Gateway advertisers to see if they'd be willing to share some thoughts on how their respective business fared in 2021 compared to 2020 when we were struck with a global pandemic. We still hear constant reports on the news of supply chain issues and hardships related to keeping up with employment demands. There seems to be shortage of qualified candidates in nearly every industry at the moment. Huge thanks to those who took the time to assess where they've been and where they're headed. The questions we posed were high level and included the following:

- 1. As 2021 comes to a close, how did the year stack up compared the tumultuous nature of 2020?**
- 2. What were some successes? What were some challenges?**
- 3. Did you reassess your way of doing things at all?**
- 4. What are you hoping 2022 has in store as we turn to a new year?**

Here are each of their responses:



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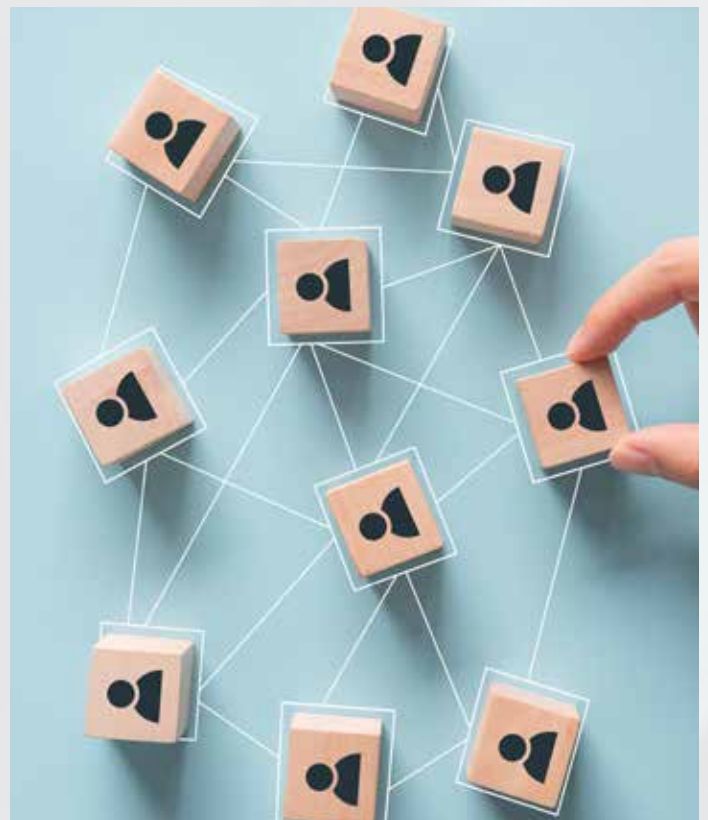
Our strongest success for 2021 was our ability to maintain our supply chain. Through intentional scrutinization of ‘normal’ materials used in the course of fabrication and a bit of ‘ball parking’ for projected needs, considering the instability of the year, Howard Products did an excellent job of maintaining our ‘On Time’ Delivery Record. There were a couple of instances where we were ‘caught short’. However, in the main, Howard Product’s staff and suppliers worked very closely keeping an eye on material supplies and alternate sourcing (when necessary). There have been the rare occasions when needed materials simply ‘disappeared’. No supplies, no future delivery of supplies. That that case, a bit of Yankee ingenuity, the blessing of owning a fabrication shop, having great outside vendors, we were able to ‘redesign’ the needed part and source the part ourselves. Engineering, Production and Purchasing staff have done an outstanding job of TEAMWORK this year.

In instances when delivery dates just couldn’t be met, we were proactive with communication to all parties concerned. In almost every case, with a bit of compromise, we were able to arrive at ‘doable’ revised delivery dates. The key to the success of this strategy was timely, HONEST, communication and understand. Across industry, personnel understood the situation all were sharing. It was not as if customers could go elsewhere and source their part. NO ONE had supplies (or staff.) Had we ‘waited it out’ to see if we could make delivery; Had we ‘fudged’ the date and delivered late, had we not had close communication with our outside vendors, our delivery times could have gone badly sideways resulting in highly dissatisfied customers. Fortunately, we coped fairly well with our issues.

In as much as supply chain issues were challenging, staffing would have to be the single most challenging variable. While we had a ‘stable’ workforce, we required an individual with a specialized skill set: difficult to find as these skills are no longer taught. We were forced to find an individual who had innate talent as well as a

willingness to learn a new skill. He was an ‘invaluable’ find. In another case we needed a worker to fit into our workforce. With some diligent work we were able to locate such an individual. These two workers have had quite a positive impact on our output.

Some might think that COVID was our single most ‘difficult’ factor. Not at all. COVID became more of a ‘variable’. Once a ‘process’ was developed to deal with the issue (cleansing, distancing, scrutiny of ‘ill’ employees, requiring testing to return to work, etc.) it just became another item on a checklist. While it required us to ‘monitor’ our workforce’s health more closely than we might, once everyone realized that practices were in place to protect everyone, there were few objections. Other than an outbreak 9 months ago, our facility remains COVID free, due in no small part to everyone’s cooperation.



Reassess: Not really. When we became ISO 9001-2015 Quality Mgt. registered, we instituted bimonthly staff meetings. A critical part of those meetings is 'risk management'. By that I mean, the management team brainstorms possible risks to the company and assess their threat value. If deemed to be a serious threat, we project solutions and gauge the 'success' of those solutions. Weeks may go by with nothing assessed. Then one week may occur when an issue occurs to someone, and it is discussed. Keeping communication open and encouraging more 'global' thinking helps keep employees 'fresh' and motivated for 'out of the box' thinking. This past year we leaned on our history of risk management and embraced looking for 'weak' areas. Our history of risk assessment absolutely helped us.

We look for increased positivity in 2022. Currently, across the board, folks are worried. Customers are worried, suppliers are worried, employees are worried. This is leading to a negative environment of siloism

and turf/job protection. Folks are too busy 'protecting' what's theirs instead of anticipating what can be next in an encouraging way. We must move away from 'what disease is next' to how do we live in the world today. Risk is a fact of life. Nothing has ever been guaranteed. Once one accepts what is, one can move on to what 'can be'.

We are a small company. Yet, we face the 'same' problems larger companies face. Because we are small there is less margin for 'reaction' time or errors. It is crucial we 'get it right' the first time. There is very little margin for error. Given our 70-year history. More often we are 'on target' than we miss the mark. Yet our size allows us to be nimble in our management and react perhaps more quickly than larger companies with more management layers.

Martha Hawley  
V/P Business Development



# MuShield®

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Londonderry, New Hampshire

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***As 2021 comes to a close, how did the year stack up compared to the tumultuous nature of 2020?***

The momentum for a busy manufacturing year started in 2020 and continued into 2021 even with COVID on the forefront of our minds every day. We continue to be busier than ever and 2022 doesn't look like it'll slow down at all.

***What were some successes?***

Being able to continue business as usual was a success considering all of the other sectors that may face challenges with COVID outbreaks, limited working staff and/or supply chain breakdown.

We experienced each of the obstacles within some capacity, but ultimately, were able to come in each day and produce sensitive magnetic shields for our customers that were in dire need of them. Lead times increased a bit, but I think the biggest win for MuShield was that our lead times increased by days and not months like many other vendors.

***What were some challenges?***

The biggest challenge was trying to get people to come to work! No, not our loyal employees, but new hires. With all the additional work going through our shop the past 18 months, we have had trouble keeping up and there wasn't much to pick out of from the unemployment pool. We have learned that many have chosen to start up their own business at home (similar to [www.cardsczar.com](http://www.cardsczar.com)) as opposed to going back to work. We applaud the entrepreneurial spirit of these folks, but it would be great if we could convince some of those people to come work for us too!

***Did you reassess your way of doing things?***

Not particularly. Other than Zoom or Teams calls, we carried on business as usual as we always have.

***What are you hoping 2022 has in store as we turn to a new year?***

I'm hoping that the anxiety surrounding all things COVID all but disappears and the economy continues to remain strong.

Luke Grilli  
Vice President of Sales and Marketing





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### ***As 2021 comes to a close, how did the year stack up compared to the tumultuous nature of 2020?***

2021 actually turned out better than I anticipated. We were better prepared to uphold new a set of rules for doing business, sales were up, and people started to move again.

### ***What were some successes?***

We were very fortunate not to have any Covid disruption. Customers have started to visit us again for machinery demos and engineering consultations. We had our 35th Year Celebration and Open House, which was attend by over 300 customers. We had the showroom well ventilated for everyone's benefit, and the weather was perfect for open doors. It just gave a sense of the old normal to the year.

### ***What were some challenges?***

The pandemic still hangs like a sword above all our heads. People are not sure whether to get the vaccine or not. Rules of entry at customer facilities for our sales and service personnel change weekly, so we have to stay on top of these changes. Not to mention the ongoing supply chain disruption, which makes scheduling a challenge, as we can never be 100 percent sure a repair part or component will ship on schedule. Regardless, we try to think and plan to stay ahead of the curve. My staff handles both issues very well, and they have kept our customers up and running. So, while we have had challenges, we have had many more successful customer interactions than our industry might have expected. In fact, a couple weeks ago, we received a prominent award for service from one of our OEMs, Doosan Machine Tools America. Given the time, we are very proud of that.

### ***Did you reassess your way of doing things?***

Absolutely. To start, our parts inventory was heavily scrutinized to ensure critical items are always kept in stock at manageable levels and to avoid delivery delays. For safety, we implemented every reasonable recommended measure to insure our employee's safety. For example, our Field Service Technicians will rope off their work area with caution tape should social distancing become an issue again. Masks and sanitizer are standard employee issue, a part of everyday life and available to any employee who wants them. We have found video conferencing very useful and will continue to use it where it makes sense for our customers, staff, and suppliers. It works for meetings, and a customer can even take a cell phone out to a machine and, if not send a photo, show us live what is happening. This is good.

### ***What are you hoping 2022 has in store as we turn to a new year?***

As 2021 provided some relief from the lockdown of 2020. I sincerely hope we can continue to move toward "normal" living and working conditions. Also, our customers are pretty focused on automated machines that offer more capability, efficiency, flexibility, and autonomy. I am certain this will continue to grow throughout the next year and beyond. If I can put in a plug for ABLE, we represent eight equipment lines and provide service, parts, tech support and training. We can help.

Alan Lockery  
President

**There you have it. We appreciate the insight very much and hope that it's useful to all of our readers as we collectively (and individually) look to turn the page on 2021 and hope for a prosperous 2022! By propping each other up and lending a helping hand where it makes sense, we'll only be stronger as an industry and as a regional powerhouse within the manufacturing world. If you have any stories to share at any time, we'd love to hear from you. Share any and all things on your mind to [chris@thegatewaymag.com](mailto:chris@thegatewaymag.com).**

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## BELT TECHNOLOGIES, INC. FEATURED ON BLOOMBERG'S "WORLD'S GREATEST"

AGAWAM, Mass. – Belt Technologies, Inc., a manufacturer of custom metal belt conveyor solutions for more than 50 years, was featured on an episode of “World’s Greatest” on Bloomberg Television. The episode, which was filmed at Belt’s Agawam, Massachusetts headquarters, was first aired on Saturday, December 4, 2021 and again on Saturday, December 11, 2021. You can view it on demand by heading to: [www.worldsgreatesttelevision.com/post/episode-312](http://www.worldsgreatesttelevision.com/post/episode-312)

“World’s Greatest” brings people, places and companies into the spotlight. Created by How2Media Productions in Boynton Beach, Florida, the program, currently in its 15th season, helps audiences connect with and understand the companies behind products people use every day.

“We’re excited and honored to be able to tell our story through this medium,” said Denis Gagnon, CEO of Belt Technologies. “Working with our customers to create a unique, customized solution is crucial to our process, and we’re proud to show how we are one of the world’s greatest with our custom metal belts.”

Over the past five decades, Belt’s PureSteel® products have provided customers with a more effective solution

for applications ranging from industrial automation and robotics to food processing, medical and cleanroom applications and more. Used in demanding environments and operations, the belts provide many benefits not found in alternative materials.

“Our customers know they can trust the exacting accuracy of our PureSteel® belts, conveyor systems and pulleys,” said Gagnon. “Unlike alternatives, our metal belts can withstand temperature extremes, vacuum conditions and caustic environments, all while maintaining our signature pinpoint precision. We’re happy to get the word out and encourage those in the industry to check out our segment on ‘World’s Greatest.’”

### *About Belt Technologies*

*Belt Technologies, Inc. has been producing custom metal belt conveyor solutions for new and existing conveyor systems for more than five decades. Sophisticated engineering, advanced manufacturing processes, and an unlimited variety of configurations and coatings are available to custom-design belts to suit any application. Metal belts, timing belts, and metal drive tapes are superior, high-quality options for automated production and robotic facilities. To learn more about Belt Technologies and metal conveyor belts, visit [belttechnologies.com](http://belttechnologies.com).*

## GLOBAL PRECISION PRODUCTS, LLC ACQUIRES WILL-MOR MANUFACTURING, LLC

*Acquisition bolsters company’s position as a premier supplier of difficult to manufacture components for the aerospace and defense industries*

Global Precision Products, LLC, an AS9100 and ISO:13485 certified company and a leading provider of contract manufacturing services to aerospace, defense, medical and piezoelectric sensor companies announced that it has acquired Will-Mor Manufacturing, LLC.

Founded in 1953 and headquartered in Seabrook, NH, Will-Mor Manufacturing is an AS9100 certified, industry leading and trusted source of difficult to machine, mission critical engine components for both commercial and military aerospace applications, as well as ordnance for the defense industry.

“Our acquisition of Will-Mor Manufacturing strengthens and expands our leadership position in precision machining solutions around the world,” stated Mark Higgins, President & CEO of Global Precision Products. “The acquisition of Will-Mor Manufacturing furthers our strategy to invest in middle market precision machining companies that possess unique market position and capabilities.”

The combined capabilities and resources of both companies will add significant value to the existing customer base. The company’s offerings will now include low volume/high mix to medium volume production. The combined offerings also now include micro-swiss machining up to large diameter horizontal milling and turning and advanced automation technologies, as well as numerous secondary operations, such as welding, EDM and assembly.

“The components that Will-Mor manufactures, as well as its reputation in the aerospace industry made them a natural fit within our portfolio,” stated Higgins. “The company’s professional management team, as well as its geographical position on the I-95 corridor made this business attractive to us as we continue to enhance our capabilities to better serve our blue-chip customer base.”

***For more information visit [www.will-mor.com](http://www.will-mor.com).***

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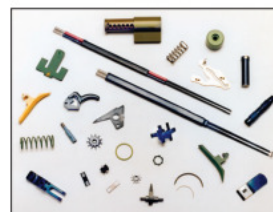
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