



Tomorrow's manufacturing solutions, today

*A local job shop experiences **TRUE** partnership when it **MATTERED** most*



Ehrhardt Tool & Machine Company, founded in 1937 by Willis Ehrhardt, started out doing government contract work for agencies such as the Army and Navy making machine guns, clips for ammunition and belts, and doing various other things. Ehrhardt then transitioned into tool and die work for customers like Emerson Electric, as well as building special machines.

During a recent interview with Steve Galle, a long-time Ehrhardt employee, he shared his thoughts on the company's growth and explained their decisions to buy from Hartwig and their experience with Okuma Double Column machining centers.

"We have two double column machining centers at our facility. One installed in 2004 that is an MCR-A5C 20x40 and the more recent one is the MCR-A5C 25x50, which was installed in June of 2008. We are happy with both machines. Okuma produces quality machines in both accuracy and rigidity. We originally bought our first Okuma with an accuracy call-out that was tighter than normal, and they were more than happy to meet our accuracy requirements. Some of the other companies were a bit scared to do that. Okuma didn't have a problem at all with doing it and they maintained the accuracy. The machine is as accurate as when it was installed. So, we really wanted to stick with that kind of quality – we bought the second machine somewhat based on that. We were just tickled that we could get the same type of quality machine as what we had before. The accuracy and dependability of the Okuma machines speak for itself. We've had really good luck with them. These machines run 18-20 hours a day with very little downtime. Simply put, they are good quality machines." Galle then stated, "The machine

is perfect for the parts that we are running. It is very time consuming if you have to do multiple set-ups. In addition, your accuracy is maintained if you do not have to unclamp that part from the machine and re-pick it up without moving it. Obviously, moving a big part like that was quite a task before we got the Okuma MCR-A5C five sided machines. Plus, doing these parts on a machine that has the 90-degree head attachment that pivots around allows us to work on all five sides of the parts and probably saves 3 times the cycle time from start to finish."

In closure he adds, "We were pressed to get the second machine up and going as soon as possible since we already had the job, and we needed the machine to start producing parts. We did not have enough machine time on our first machine, and needed the capacity of that second machine to get the customer these parts."

From the time of issuing the purchase order to cutting our first chip, it was a little over seven weeks. We were very impressed with that. When we needed something done, the team was ready to do it. We had very good cooperation from Hartwig. They sat down with us when we were purchasing the machine and looked at our timeline and said it was not going to be an easy task, but they would do everything they could do to make it happen. They followed true to everything they had said they would try to do. So it was a very good working relationship. They were very instrumental in getting this project up and going. They were more than willing to do whatever it took to meet our needs. The follow-up on service and training was really good, timely and effective. Basically, when we needed something, they were there to help."