CLOW WINS THE ERGO CUP!

It's an award for ergonomics excellence ... and it belongs to Clow Valve



When it comes to designing the workplace to minimize fatigue and injury—the science of ergonomics—the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration sets a high bar for companies. And OSHA did just that at Clow Valve when they sent a team to conduct a benchmarking ergonomic improvements session. The Clow team not only took the challenge to heart, they decided to enter the Ergo Cup® Competition at the Applied Ergonomics Conference in Reno, Nevada. The Ergo Cup gives companies an opportunity to showcase effective ergonomic solutions or education initiatives that they've come up with over the previous 24 months. At last year's conference, 35 companies from all over the world presented their innovations.

The Ergo Cup® presents three awards annually for outstanding solutions through training, engineering and teamwork: Team-Driven Workplace Solutions; Engineering/Ergonomist-Driven Workplace Solutions; and Training and Education Ergonomic Programs. In addition to these, conference attendees choose five recipients of Ergo Excellence awards.

Clow Valve won the Team-Driven Workplace Solutions category. The team competed against The Boeing Company, Bridgestone/Firestone, GE Energy, Honda of America, and Johnston & Johnston Medical of Brazil. Clow was represented by Corey Danner, Hydrant Assembler; Jim Jegerlehner, Ergonomist; Jim Kopaska, Engineer; Dan Krusemark, Hydrant Supervisor; Rod Swager, Safety Manager; and Ryan Waddell, Hydrant Assembler. Their innovation required them to re-think how fire hydrants are assembled. Previously the hydrants—consisting of the nozzle section, pipe and shoe—were assembled in a vertical attitude, causing employees to perform heavy tasks in awkward positions. Over a four-year period, the department experienced 32 injuries, 14 of them serious, resulting in 624 restricted duty days. Clearly a new assembly method was called for, and Clow formed a team in 2006 to investigate alternatives. Their ergonomic solution wound up being a new horizontal assembly process that minimizes most of the job stressors, reduces assembly cycle time and improves product quality.


Jim Jegerlehner, left, and Jim Kopaska

Not surprisingly, the Clow team is very happy with the new process. And why not, considering the impact of the horizontal assembly: back stressor reduction from 36% to 5%, upper extremity stressor reduction from 26% to 10%, assembly time reduced from .533 man hours per unit to .494 per unit, and no injuries or incidents so far at the new assembly station. That sure sounds worthy of the Ergo Cup® to us!



From left: Ryan Waddell, Matt Dykema, Jerry Jones, Tom Giesel, Dan Krusemark, Bob Evans, Jim Kopaska, Rick Bryan, Jim Wakefield, Jim Jegerlehner, Andy Holmberg and Rod Swager.

Ergo Cup Team Members:

Corey Danner, Hydrant Assembler; **Jim Jegerlehner**, Ergonomist; **Jim Kopaska**, Engineer; **Dan Krusemark**, Hydrant Supervisor; **Rod Swager**, Safety Manager; and **Ryan Waddell**, Hydrant Assembler.

McWANE ERGO CUP II
BETTER, SAFER & SMARTER

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to reduce and prevent workplace injuries...

It's not a mission impossible, it's the 2nd Annual McWane Ergo Cup competition–held on November 8, 2011. Teams from around the country offered up projects that they have implemented at their facilities within the last 24 months. These were projects aimed at reducing injuries while improving workplace efficiency and transforming processes to best fit the needs of our employees.

The top team didn't just help make their colleagues safer and more efficient–they collected a cash prize and are preparing for a trip to the National Ergo Cup competition in Nashville, Tennessee, in March 2012.

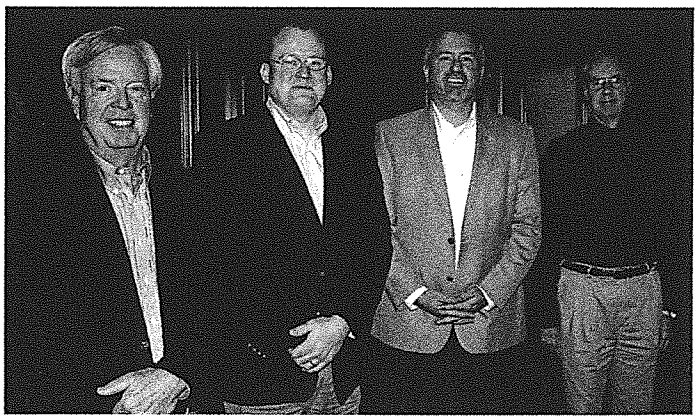
"The commitment to safety shown by our team members, on behalf of each other and McWane, is inspiring," said Barb Wisniewski, vice president for Health & Safety. "This is a perfect example of the McWane Way in action."

Ergonomics is the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the capabilities of the working population. This emphasizes the development of industry- and task-specific guidelines for reducing and preventing workplace musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and other injuries.

Each project was judged on measurable outcomes such as return on investment, quantified reduction of injury and reduced workers compensation costs, among other factors.★



1st Place winners Union Foundry: Bryan Owens, Safety Engineer; Lamar Ragan, GFD Manager; Sergio Alvarez, Supervisor; Chriss Suddeth, Safety Manager



Thanks to this year's judges (left to right):
Pat Tyson, Attorney, Constangy, Brooks & Smith
Jason Robinson, Director National Safety Council, Alabama Chapter
Stephen Jenkins, Certified Professional Ergonomist, Auburn Engineers
Don Robinson, Ergonomist/Safety Manager, Norfolk Southern



WINNERS OF ERGO CUP II

1st place: Union Foundry

Team Leader / Chriss Suddeth
First-place winners collected $1,000 each

Entry: Dipline Hook Cleaning Process

The hooks used to hang castings on diplines experience paint build up very quickly. This has to be cleaned to prevent a real potential hazard: castings not being fully set on the hooks and falling which risks serious workplace injury. In the old method, the "Dipline Hook Cleaning Process" required employees to remove hooks from the line and clean them with a hammer to knock the dried paint off. With the new process, cold temperatures are used to crack off the built-up paint. This results in less repetition and force and less time to better complete the process and ensure safety for the team.

2nd place: Clow Water Systems

Team Leader / Brian Daugherty
Second-place winners collected $500 each

Entry: BMM – Sand Leveling in Flask

The old process of leveling sand in the BMM flask required an operator to manually level sand with a tool that demands awkward postures. It put undue pressure on upper arms, shoulders and the back. This had been the procedure for years. The solution modified the design of the dump equipment to direct sand to the center of the flask, thereby eliminating the requirement to manually level sand at all.

3rd place: Clow Valve Machine Shop

Team Leader / Chris Prendergast
Third-place winners collected $250 each

Entry: 14-16 inch Valve test cell improvement

The team developed a concept for a new 14-16 inch assembly and test cell with optimal safety, quality, delivery and productivity characteristics. The team then modeled the cell and conducted a simulated pilot run, allowing for revisions to the concept.

Other facility teams entering projects: Bibby Ste. Croix, Clow Canada, Kennedy Valve, M&H Valve, Tyler Pipe, AB&I Foundry and Anaco.

AMAZING COMPETITION!

We can't wait to see everyone next year for the third annual McWane Ergo Cup.

