

LaserCraft Industrial, LLC, A New ESI Client

Located in Gaylord, MI, LaserCraft Industrial, LLC (LCI) is gearing up for production.

LCI is working on installing and training on a new, state-of-the-art piece of equipment that laser cuts structural steel. The machine is, in some cases, ten times faster than current processes, and has exceptional precision. With this new capability, LCI will provide improved products to existing customers as well as have the opportunity to acquire additional customers that require laser precision. LCI is staffing up and will begin production sometime after February 1, 2021.



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New ESI Clients in Evert, MI

A 236,000 square foot facility was recently purchased in Evert, MI to be used as the location of four new ESI clients, as well as warehousing space. The facility was home to a glass manufacturing company that produced windows for the automotive industry into early 2020. To give you an idea of how big 236,000 square feet is, the building that was once Alpena Kmart is 118,000 square feet, which makes the Evert facility twice that size.

Four new ESI clients will be located in the facility: Duram Mfg., LLC (weld and assembly), Patriot Steel Works, LLC (sheet metal cutting/shaping), Garison Coatings, LLC (powder coating/paint) and Just Kitting, 4.0, LLC (learn more about Just Kitting on page three). Over the course of the next few months, Duram, Patriot, and Garison will each hire ten or more team members. In addition to meeting the needs of these businesses, this will also help address the jobs lost when the glass facility closed. The businesses in the space will produce conveyor for customers from start to finish. Having businesses in the same facility that can produce conveyor from start to finish will also more easily allow for the production of sub-assemblies.

The cultural goal of the businesses within the Evert facility is a culture of operational excellence, which is different than the customer intimacy culture many other ESI clients focus on (learn more about these concepts in a future editon of Equipped; credited to M. Treacy and F. Wiersma in *The Discipline of Market Leaders*). This difference is due to several factors, including customer needs and expectations. Looking to the future, the plans for the facility include growth of the four businesses located in the facility, the possible addition of other businesses, and continuation of warehousing activities.

As ESI clients grow, their needs grow and change too. They need more/different space and more people with competencies to do the work required. The facility in Evert will help address some of the space needs, and will also give the new ESI clients access to a workforce that has been untapped by ESI to meet the needs of their clients.

Competency Needs TODAY

If you would have asked six months ago what the top competency needs were for ESI clients, the answer would have been shop-related jobs.

Primarily assembly, powder coating, and welding. Today, the need is very different.

Although there are still openings for team members in the shops, there has also been an up-tick in other needs. These include: sales, product management, engineering, CAD designing/detailing, business development, operations, project management, accounting, and entrepreneurial, commercial, and technical leads.

ESI does not only place people in shop careers, but also a variety of other roles as well. One of the best ways to recruit people is through referrals and word of mouth. If you can help steer people to ESI, please do! View the ESI website for details of the latest career opportunities.



A Variety of Coatings and Finishes

You may notice that much of the equipment manufactured by ESI clients is sent to customers in various colors. Much of what you see is applied via a process called powder coating. But did you know that there are many other coating processes utilized by ESI clients? Especially when you consider pulley lagging (the material bonded to the pulley to increase friction and to protect the pulley), and other parts of equipment that receive coatings or finishes. Keep reading to learn more about the variety of processes and materials used by ESI clients when it comes to coating and finishing of equipment.

- Powder Coating (first photo below, Coating Concepts, Inc.): Material is prepped, and color is electrostatically applied as a powder and then heat cured to the metal substrate.
- Wet Spray: The material is prepped, color is applied as a liquid and is then left to air dry.
- Polyethylene Coating (PE): A thermoplastic powder coating that is applied in multiple layers if required, up to 12 mils.
- Vulcanized Rubber/Urethane: A process that converts uncured polymers such as rubber and urethane using an autoclave curing vessel to provide a durable vulcanized product that is then machine ground and grooved to customer specification.
- Sleeves/Press Fit Sleeves (sleeves at Mid-West Mfg. are pictured above): A urethane, vinyl, neoprene or uhw, sleeve is fit over a roller to assist with durability, friction, product protection, lifespan and to reduce noise.
- Grinding/machining/polishing (second photo below is finished products at PCI Mfg., Inc.): Nothing is applied but the finish is achieved through grinding/machining/polishing the part to a specific finish tolerance for optimal functionality.
- Eradi-Lag (patent pending) (third photo below from ProCal Innovations, LLC and KTM, Inc.): A proprietary blend of rubber is used to create lagging for specific pulleys.

Finishes are important in ways that go far beyond visual appearance. Finishes assist with durability, usability, efficiency, effectiveness, product lifespan, safety and more. The type of equipment, combined with what it will be used for, how it will be used, and the environment it will be in, all help to determine what type of finish it will require.



Introducing Just Kitting 4.0, LLC

A Chaotic Storage Solution

Inventory. It is a dreaded word by many. But it is such an important word for ESI clients. While ESI clients manage their on-site inventory with great efficiency and accuracy, a need for better storage and inventory was identified for in-process and long-term work. That's where new ESI client, Just Kitting 4.0, LLC comes in.

Just Kitting 4.0, LLC (JKL) was developed to assist ESI clients with warehousing space. Storage and warehousing is necessary but it is a constant work in progress to be as efficient as possible in order to use resources of space and time most effectively. The goal is to move material as few times as a possible, but to use the space efficiently, and to maintain organization so items in storage can be found quickly when needed. That is where chaotic storage comes in. Chaotic storage is a method of warehousing and storing items that seems confusing because it is not neat and orderly to the outside eye, but it is orderly when tracked with technology. In chaotic storage, the characteristics of items being stored are irrelevant (rollers by other rollers, bearings by other bearings, for example), and there are not permanent sections reserved for specific items. Items for storage are labeled appropriately, stored where they fit based on what is available at that particular time, and are then tracked in a warehouse management software system that is easy to use to find what is being sought when it is needed.



Meeting the Warehousing Needs

3020 US 23 South was recently purchased with the intent of warehousing equipment for various ESI clients. Where is 3020 US 23 South? It used to be the location of Prell's Services in Alpena, just south of Gordon Road. This 30,000 square foot facility is a combination of warehouse and office space. The space is actively being used for warehousing and will be into the foreseeable future. There is potential for the office space to be utilized as office space in the future, and for the warehouse areas to become light manufacturing space. The tenant that existed in the building upon closing remains a tenant in the building at this time.

Adequate and appropriately zoned space is just one ingredient in the recipe for success for ESI clients.

Direct Deposit for Payroll? Why?

Direct Deposit: Quick. Easy. Secure. Convenient. Reliable.

Northwood Solutions, Inc. (they process your payroll), would like to remind you about direct deposit. Instead of a physical check, you can receive your payroll deposited directly into your bank account(s) on pay day. The benefits are great, and it is easy to do. Access the form online on ESI's intranet (for those with access), or request a form from ESI (see page four for contact information). The form will ask for your full name, address, your employer, the last four digits of your social security number, and information about your financial institution including their name, address, routing and account numbers, and what kind of account (savings, checking, or IRA). You can direct funds to be split into up to three accounts as well. Once submitted, forms typically take one full pay period to take effect.



Contact ESI

ESI contacts

Newsletter: Jackie Krawczak

989.358.6175

jackie.krawczak@kabu.net

Benefits: Leslie Davis

989.358.7181

leslied@kabu.net

Career Opportunities: Ashley

DeFisher

989.358.6289

Ashley.defisher@kabu.net

Misc. HR Questions:

989.358.7190

info@358-jobs.com

Misc.

Opportunities / Competencies /

Career Questions

989.358.JOBS (5627)

jobs@358-jobs.com



i2P Offers Space for COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

When i2P representatives realized they had space available that could solve logistical hurdles to providing vaccination clinics for COVID-19 vaccines, they reached out to offer help. It didn't take long and plans were in place for health professionals to utilize space (for the very low rental rate of just \$1!) at 2380 US 23 South (formerly the Alpena Mall) to administer vaccinations for COVID-19. The space allows for plenty of social distancing, waiting areas that are indoors and out of the elements, and space to wait the required amount of time post-vaccination, under observation. All vaccinations are scheduled in advance so patients are not waiting as long as they might in a first-come, first-served format. The vaccination roll out is also in scheduled phases, aimed at vaccinating the highest risk citizens first. Protocols will be followed in the space to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including a requirement of facemasks being worn, extra sanitization of the space, no entrance if someone is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, and social distancing.

Officials at i2P indicated they are happy to assist with this process to help keep Northeast Michigan citizens safe and healthy.

Tips from ESI: Improved Communication is Valuable

One of the main competencies that ESI clients ask for in applicants is the ability to communicate effectively. Effective communication is important to being successful in your job, as part of your team, in your relationships, and for the overall success of a business. Following are some tips for better communication that you are encouraged to consider.

- Communication does not mean talking a lot. Effective communication is purposeful and achieves a result. Excessive communication (talking just to talk) can cause the opposite to happen and decrease the effectiveness of the communication.
- In communication, listening is just as important as talking. If you listen and do not understand the message, ask questions. While you are listening, focus on the incoming message without letting your mind wander, resulting in missing or misunderstanding the message.
- If you communicate a message to someone and you are not sure it was received or if you think it may have been received differently than you intended, send the message again, or ask for the receiver to restate what they heard.
- If you receive a message, it is best to reiterate what you received to make sure all parties are on the same page.
- Do not assume people know what you are talking about. Specify important details so everyone is aware of the exact topic (project, job, machine, etc.) you are referring to.
- Ask for the communication you need to achieve your responsibilities. If you need more information, request it.
- Consider your nonverbal communication as well. Tone and facial expression can impact the effectiveness of communication.

Good communication is one of the most important factors of success. Consider this quote from Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."