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LIFT**

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Bend-Pak

AGGRESSIVELY TAKING ON THE AFTERMARKET



Bend-Pak President Don Henthorn notes that undercar shops remain the key players in company sales.

Bend-Pak is on the move.

The manufacturer of automotive lifts and tube benders is growing. And according to company officials, it is taking an aggressive sales and marketing stance in order to capture market share. By continually expanding its product line, Bend-Pak has positioned itself as an industry leader and remains associated in many different segments of the automotive aftermarket.

Bend-Pak, with more than 30 years of manufacturing experience, has outgrown two manufacturing sites and, just this past spring, moved into a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. This new facility, in Santa Paula, CA, has more than 100,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space and is situated on 3/4 acres just north of Los Angeles in Ventura County.

Although Bend-Pak's annual shipments have increased more than 200% in the past five years, worldwide demand for its products continues to grow and outweigh supply. Because of this, in late 1993 it began implementing a two-year plan to increase production capacity and productivity, while at the same time generating further improvements in product quality.

At this time it was obvious that the present manufacturing facility would not meet the needs of a constantly expanding sales force. Moving into a bigger facility was, without a doubt, the only real solution. Planning was started immediately and a site was chosen. After building plans were finished and the construction completed, the next important step would be the actual move.

With the move unfortunately taking place in Bend-Pak's busy season, timing would prove to be very critical. Bend-Pak's president,

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Don Henthorn, understood that any period of shut-down would be lost revenue and possible gained revenue for competitors. He did not intend to let that happen.

Months before the move was to take place, Bend-Pak increased production in order to create additional inventory. With more than 35 models in its line, selecting the correct models for stock was important. "When it was time to start the move, tension was high," Henthorn said.

"Everyone had a job to do with detailed instructions," said Jay Molder, vice president and general manager. "They knew what, and when they had to do it."

Although the move started on a Friday, the new plant was 70% operational by the following Monday, and by Tuesday all departments were up and running. With additional inventory in stock, shipping was virtually unaffected. "It took more than 100 truckloads and a crew of 60 to move the bulk of machinery and raw stock. We all worked around the clock, and everything really went better than planned," Molder said. "There were things out of our control that we didn't take into consideration, like the city's power supply, for example. On Tuesday morning, with all the machines and welders hooked up, power stayed on for only about 30 minutes before a main transformer blew about a block away from our plant. This really dampened our spirits, but after a few hours we were up and running. We use a lot of electricity, and I'm sure that in the morning when we turn things on, all the lights in the town go dim."

Nearly every manufacturing process was redesigned and new

equipment installed to improve production. Many areas that had not been automated now are. "This was not just a relocation, but a complete plant redesign and modernization," Molder said.

Jeff Kritzer, director of sales and marketing, who has been with Bend-Pak for more than 13 years, says he has seen steady increases year after year in both lift and bender product lines. "Just five years ago, the position we are in now was only a dream, but a sought-after one," says Kritzer. "We always have a goal to beat. Although at the time it may seem unrealistic, we always seem to get there. We won't stop until we do."

The move to Santa Paula has enabled the company to increase its production and prepare itself for further sales expansion. Bend-Pak now has more than 130 employees on its payroll and is running two full shifts to keep up with orders. Bend-Pak's order and customer-service department, headed by longtime employee Craig Haggmark, has been busy writing orders and taking care of customers. "We are starting to get volume discounts on fax paper," Craig noted, as he often finds himself hard pressed to keep up with the orders continually coming out of the fax machine.

Henthorn predicts growth will continue, saying that much of the company's success can be attributed to Kritzer's aggressive sales and marketing tactics and Molder's operating and manufacturing prowess.

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Bend-Pak's new offices and manufacturing facility in Santa Paula, CA.



Bend-Pak's management team (from left): Jay Molder, vice president and general manager; Don Henthorn, president & CEO, and Jeff Kritzer, director of marketing.

As part of the move to the new facilities, Molder added more CAD/CAM (computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing) capabilities to the operation and Kritzer upgraded the sales and marketing departments with new computer systems. Continuing its ongoing devotion to improving quality and productivity, the company is using the CAD/CAM systems constantly, Molder said.

Bend-Pak, a member of the Automotive Lift Institute, recently went through extensive testing by ETL, a certified laboratory, to verify that its lifts meet all operating and safety conditions. Although it is not required, Bend-Pak strongly believes that testing such as this positions the company in a class separate from other manufacturers. "We passed the tests with flying colors," Molder noted. "These tests are very extreme. All aspects of operation are covered in addition to backup safety systems that are built into all of our lifts." As part of its ongoing commitment to

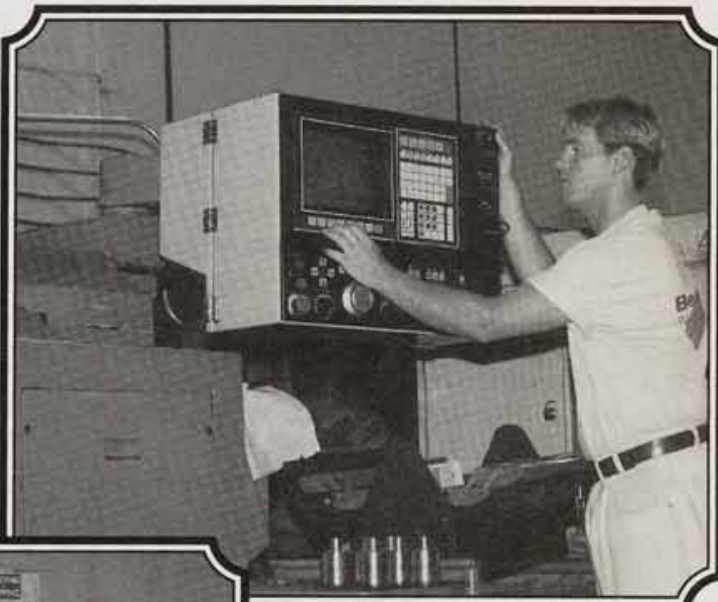
quality and safety, Bend-Pak will remain an active member of the Automotive Lift Institute, Henthorn said.

Bend-Pak's roots are in the muffler industry, but as the market has evolved into other undercar services, Bend-Pak's management team had the foresight to evolve with it.

Today, Bend-Pak prides itself on having one of the most complete equipment lines in the industry. Its above-ground lift line, with more than 35 models, continues to expand. By the end of the year additional models will be added with the introduction of the

"Performance Series," a new line developed primarily for the ever-growing export market. Two-post lifts still remain the most popular, with four-post alignment lifts following close behind.

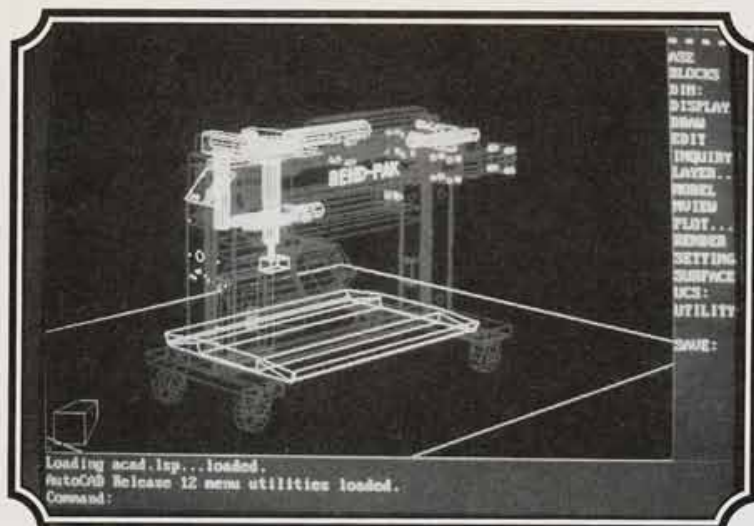
New products are always in the works at Bend-Pak. Just this year it developed a unique open-center low-rise lift for a leading quick-lube franchise. The lift makes it possible to span a pit without interfering with the service area. "We made sure to apply for a patent



Gary Henthorn prepares a CNC machine for die cutting.

The larger facility has enabled the company to increase its lift production.





CAD/CAM capabilities have given Bend-Pak easier access to blueprint updates.

Bend-Pak already has begun the next step of strategic plans to carry itself through the turn of the century. "In 1993 we began an extensive study of our current and future potential and identified the opportunities and obstacles for growth," Henthorn said. Today, Bend-Pak is concentrating its efforts to expand its international sales and eventually to dominate the global marketplace. "We have increased our export sales by more than 50% in the past two years and see tremendous growth ahead," Molder noted.

when it was developed," Kritzer said. He noted that most leading fast-lube chains recently have begun adding tire balancing and rotation to diversify their services. Having a patent on a lift like this would help position Bend-Pak a step ahead of its competition.

Although the demand for benders has stabilized over the years, Kritzer noted that Bend-Pak continues to increase annual sales. "Bend-Pak has from its beginning, and will continue to do so, paved the way for others to follow." Bend-Pak always has been a pioneer, he noted, constantly looking for ways to separate itself from its competitors. "Companies we once looked at for insight and direction are now looking our way to see what we are doing. It's the best form of flattery."

Bend-Pak's digital bender, which has yet to be imitated, is one of its most popular models. "Many customers like high-tech," Henthorn said. "Our digital automatic benders give them what they're looking for."

Bend-Pak's focus on customer satisfaction, improved products, and enhanced dealer sales and service has enabled it to take advantage of this growth. "Improving customer satisfaction remains a top priority for us," Henthorn said. "Keeping our distributors actively involved and providing superior service is of the utmost importance. We are constantly reminded that without customers Bend-Pak would not be here today."

Company At A Glance

Bend-Pak Inc.

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Personnel: Don Henthorn, president and CEO;
Jay Molder, vice president/general manager;
Jeff Kritzer, director of marketing.

Products: Automotive above-ground lifts
and tube benders

Employees: 130



Bend-Pak benefits by having one of the world's most respected names in the industry. According to Henthorn, the momentum of Bend-Pak's global success continues to grow, reflecting on three key priorities: providing exceptional customer care, enhancing its market share and remaining an efficient and quality producer.

It continues to follow a simple philosophy: Do whatever it takes.

This two-piece, open-center, low-rise P-6 Pit Stop lift is designed for the quick-lube market.

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Bend-Pak Limousine Lift

Bend-Pak has just introduced an extended "limousine" version of its already popular BP-12 four-post lift. The new

model BP-12X, with a 12,000-pound lifting capacity, is now available and ready for shipment. The new lift has a wheel-base capacity of 244 inches and is equipped with rails to be used in conjunction with rolling jacks or an



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oil-drain pan. This new model is perfect for limousine or ambulance service. An alignment version will be available soon.