

Gary Foster, President of Automation Engineering, presented this speech when accepting the Silver Crescent Award at the Salute to Manufacturing luncheon on May 26th, 2005.

Friends from TEC, Carolina First Bank, Manufacturers, TeamAEC, friends, neighbors. It is very gratifying to be recognized by Salute to Manufacturing and by Carolina First Bank as the Small Manufacturer of the Year. Thank you.

We represent the large community of small manufacturers in South Carolina and the Upstate. I thank you on behalf of those manufacturers for your support and your endorsement of manufacturing. I would also like to thank TeamAEC for the effort to get us here, and special thanks to Karl Brauner who knew we were the small manufacturer of the year when he prepared our application.

Peter Drucker said:

“All business has to measure itself against the standards set by each industry’s leader anyplace in the world.”

We all know and feel the effects of this:

Technology has an enormous influence on products and productivity

Globalization produces an increasing intensity of competition. It creates numerous business, location and market opportunities.

The global economic balance changes as China and India become markets and competitors.

Our customers are highly mobile. Expectations and requirements change. We as manufacturers must be responsive.

We are already changing how we measure value. The old analogy is that no one goes to a hardware store to buy a ¾” drill. The customer really wants a ¾” hole. We will earn less from the manufactured product. We provide more value and thereby gain more from customizing and servicing the thing which the customer bought. We’ll use our Core Values of Integrity, Teamwork, Knowledge, and Perseverance, which I am sure that you share, to solve our customers’ problems. We learn what the customer wants and we improve the value to the customer.

Jobs are more and more based on efficient use of resources. This is why it is easy to be a good manufacturer in South Carolina:

We have access to a highly skilled workforce (thanks to Clemson, Greenville Tech, and the other universities and tech schools)

Technology (via our engineering population, universities, and SCMEP)

Access to capital (thanks to our banking community including our sponsor Carolina First Bank)

Access to new markets and new customers (thanks to Greenville Area Development Corporation, Upstate Alliance, ICAR)

We are surrounded by a progressive, open-minded, and industrious community that accepts and rewards change and innovation and values the prosperity that manufacturing brings.

We have a wonderful variety of customers with world class standards and global markets.

Consider

Almost 70% of the world earns less than \$2000/year.

70% of the world does not have indoor plumbing.

70% of the world has never made a phone call.

There are more cars, more tires, more turbines, being constructed, more film and more plastic being produced, more roads being built, and more steel being made than ever before.

The undeveloped 70% of the world is developing. As they develop they will want manufactured goods and equipment. Someone will make them somewhere. We do it today and can in the future. We plan to be there, and I am sure that you do too.

America’s security and our prosperity depend on a strong manufacturing sector. South Carolina, the Upstate community, our managers and our workforce will set the standard as best in the world.

Thank you.