

Highlights

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PARKER STORE LOCATIONS

- Bangor ME
- Portland ME
- Manchester NH
- Fitchburg MA
- Cranston RI

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

- Northboro MA

EMERGENCY SERVICE PHONE

- 978-345-2200

WEB SITES

www.thehopegroup.com

www.hopeair.com

www.sorensensystems.com

Hope Air System's new web site being previewed prior to launch

Hope Air Systems, a member company of The Hope Group, today announced that it is launching its new web site as part of its continuous improvement process.

Significantly updated

The new web site has been significantly updated from the current one with an important change in mind, according to Pat Kelly, Sales Manager, for Hope Air Systems.

"The new web site will contain much of the same content as the current one, but it will be focused



more on assisting the sales and technical staff in presenting useful information to our new and existing customers," he added.

Educational tool

"What's really different is that it is designed to be

used as an educational tool for the engineer designing a new air compressor system or by a maintenance manager who is planning for the correct repair and rebuild of an existing piece of equipment," said

Pat.

Answers to questions

"We are taking note of the fact that more or our customers are turning to the Internet to find answers to questions. We want to be there with the roadmap they need to find

Hope Group Offers Customer-Login Capability

The Hope Group has introduced a customer login feature to its web site (www.thehopegroup.com), which enables customers to check on open orders, invoiced orders and shipping details. Accessed through a password protected portal on the company web site, each customer can check their status 24 hours a day from any Internet access they may have.

Responding to Customer Request

"This feature is something that our customers have asked us for and we are pleased to offer it to them using the

speed and efficiency of the Internet access," said Randy Roy, Customer Service Manager. "This new process permits a speeded-up response from us when a customer is looking for a quick update on their account. Rather than waiting for a call back or a return email, they get their answer immediately," he added.

Orientation Provided

Special orientation for each customer is being provided at their convenience and a complete instruction manual has been developed as a reference guide to all the available features for this new service.

Customer Login

Kaizen Korner

Kaizen Open Project List Offers Opportunity

By Jon Mitton

A quick check of the Open Project list posted in various places throughout the building shows that there are ample opportunities for everyone to find a Kaizen event to volunteer for this month. Remember, beginning October 1, 2005, a portion of your annual performance evaluation will be based on your participation in the Kaizen and Quality process.

OPEN PROJECTS

Accounting Work Cell

Explore possibility of creating work cell for accounting to improve communication and work flow.

Catalog Availability

Catalogs are not available to assemble master catalogs as required. Catalog condition is not acceptable.



Expense Reports

Create a listing or policy of who is authorized to approve expense reports; apply dollar limits.

Handling Short Shipments

Consider daily print out of zero ship and short shipments; consider regular review of open pick tickets.

Hydraulic Field Service

To develop field service process for hydraulic department using VSM event.

Sales Bids

To develop process for logging bids; assigning bids and following up on bids.

Fab Kit Testing

Un-tested kits could lead to major problems in the field for customers; need some sort of minimum testing program.

Shipping Database

Create a database for all necessary international shipping documentation.

Order Tracking Rebates

Proper way to enter and track complete machine orders with utility rebates.

O-ring Shortages

To develop proper way to address o-ring shortages from vendor and how to make adjustments.

Secretarial/Support Cell

Explore creation of work cell for the secretarial and support services; the objective to improve work flow and communication, while creating greater support depth and flexibility.

Employees Respond to Survey Request

The results of the recent employee survey taken by the employee awareness committee were presented and reviewed at its most recent meeting. Here are the results.

My preference for the meal:

Of the 33 respondents, 21, or 64 percent, said they preferred the buffet. The remaining 12, or 36 percent, split between selecting from a menu (7) and sit-down dinner (5).

My preference for entertainment:

Of the 33 respondents, 18, or 55 percent, said they preferred a dance band for entertainment. A comedian was the choice for 10, or 30 percent of the respondents.

My preference for venue:

Of the 33 respondents, 27, or 82 percent selected ballroom or function room. Only 6 percent selected picnic or "other." Three of the 4 "other" specifically mentioned Wachusett.

My preference for dress code:

Of the 33 respondents, 26 or 79 percent selected business casual. Only 7, or 21 percent selected semi-formal.

My preference for event date:

Of the 33 respondents, 18, or 55 percent selected early fall. Another 13, or 39 percent

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Highlights is published monthly by The Hope Group Corporation for its employees and customers.

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Member companies on the *move...*

Hope Air Systems **Expands** PET Capabilities

For those not sure what “PET” capabilities is all about - don’t worry - it’s not something furry that needs a flea collar. In this case, PET refers to a type of air compressor system that Hope Air Systems is famous for building for its bottle-blowing customers. PET is an acronym for Polyethylene Terephthalate. It



is a plastic resin of the polyester family that is used to make beverage, food and other liquid containers. That includes soda bottles, water bottles, etc. It is also one of the most important raw materials used in man-made fibers. What is important to us is that over the years we have built and installed over 300 PET systems around the world.

What’s ahead?

We expect to continue having a lot of work in the years ahead helping these customers expand their operations and to provide new customers with efficient, new, Hope Air designed systems. By adding some new manufacturers to our list of preferred providers we have improved our chances of making some important sales in the near future.

Hope Group **Exhibits** at Maine Boat Show

For the second time in two years The Hope Group exhibited at one of the new and growing boat shows in Maine. The Maine Boats & Harbors Show has proven to be a strong player in the competitive boat building arena. We had a 20 foot



exhibit under the big top and according to Steve Korandanis and Tony Cantone the show created some very important new sales leads for our marine and Mobile product lines. The show ran from August 12 to 14 and with

over 50 display boats in the water and many more on land it was quite a sight for anyone interested in seeing the finest yachts and sail boats available in this region. The sales team will be following up on the many new leads received during the show.

Sorensen Systems **Travels** To Texas For Show

Mark Ferland and Rick Ricci recently joined about 1,200 hydropower professionals at the annual Waterpower XIV Trade Show in Austin, Texas. In addition to the usual exhibits and presentations, Mark and Rick had the opportunity to participate in a tour of the Lower Colorado River Authority facility where Sorensen Systems had



participated in providing new systems for the River Operations Control Center. These systems were fabricated here at our Northboro facility. Delegates from more than 40 countries attended this show and benefited from the symposia, technical paper presentations, displays and tours. A lot

of important potential customer contacts were made at the show and Rick and Mark will be following up with those prospects in the weeks and months ahead. According to Rick, next years show is well along in the planning and will be held in Portland, Oregon. We’re sure that Sorensen Systems will be there to keep the pressure on.

Hope Air Systems Survey Results

During a recent round of customer satisfaction survey interviews, The Hope Group collected the opinions and comments of another 100 customers. This round of surveys contacted Hope Air Systems preventive maintenance agreement customers. These are customers who have a regular schedule of visits from our service technicians to tune-up their air compressors one, two, three or more times a year, depending on the size of the system.

Interesting Comments

As with the earlier round of surveys this year, the combined results are being tabulated and it is hoped that some conclusions about how to improve service can be drawn

from the findings. In the meantime, it was interesting to read some of the comments that the respondents made about our service and sales team:

- 1) - my only comment is that your service tech is always there when I have a requirement.
- 2) - your PM tech is excellent
- 3) - I enjoy working with your salesman
- 4) - your service is great
- 5) - you are always one step ahead on when my machine needs service, excellent job every time
- 6) - you do an excellent job
- 7) - real happy with your company, don't change anything
- 8) - your company is fine
- 9) - you do a great job
- 10) - I gave you high scores because I get high quality from Hope Air Systems

Employees respond to survey

Continued from Page Two

selected late fall. Spring got 2 votes. Based on these results, some observations can be made:

Majority positions

For 4 of the 5 categories there were clear majority positions. These opinions would probably hold true for the remainder who did not submit an opinion survey. The results showed that a buffet, dance band, nice room and casual dress were preferred.

Venue preference

Only question 3 on preference for a venue did not present a clear majority of opinion. However, the two top choices have a natural similarity, which would lead to the conclusion, that an evening in a nice setting was the choice.

Prefer early fall

For 4 of the 5 categories there was a clear similarity to previous Recognition Night events. Only in one category, the date, was there a specific majority in contrast to recent practice. The majority preferred an early fall as opposed to the late fall of recent years.

Thanks to everyone

The employee awareness committee included the results from this survey and other interviews with company employees in making suggestions for this year's events and for events in the years ahead. They wish to thank everyone who participated.

Plans for this year

The committee has finalized plans for this year's events and will be sending out notifications shortly, so be on the look out!

Carey's Corner

We aren't the only ones that conduct surveys

In the most recent issue of *Industrial Distribution* magazine an article appeared that described some of the findings of an annual survey they conduct among distributors like The Hope Group. They interviewed 776 executives around the country to get an idea of the general state of affairs for industrial distributors.



Among the things they discussed was the impact of the Internet, the changing role of distributors and the changing market sectors for industrial distributors. The results

were not a surprise to us. We have experienced similar things over the past few years at The Hope Group.

For example, instead of the Internet being a threat to distributors, which was a common fear 10 years ago, it actually has become an important communications tool, even if it hasn't become as important a sales tool as it has for retailers.

Another result was that customers are relying on their distributors more - not less - as products and systems become more complicated and technical. It is the distributor that brings the value-added dimension so important for manufacturers today. It's encouraging to read surveys like this to help keep our focus where it needs to be: understanding the changing requirements of the customer and working to be a leader in meeting the new challenges.

You can read more about the survey results online at www.inddist.com.

- Carey Rhoten