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Hagie Manufacturing Receives National 'Excellence in Innovation Award'

Ames, Iowa--The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) has awarded Hagie Manufacturing in Clarion, Iowa, the 2012 Excellence in Innovation Award. The award recognizes and celebrates manufacturers whose outstanding innovation, development, and implementation has contributed significantly to business excellence. The award was presented May 8 at Manufacturing Innovation 2012 in Orlando, Florida. This annual four-day event brings together over 700 manufacturers, industry experts, and MEP field staff.



Eric Esoda, Chair of NIST MEP Award Committee; Alan Hagie, President Hagie Manufacturing; Lisa Hagie; Roger Kilmer, NIST MEP Director

Alan Hagie, President of Hagie Manufacturing, states,

“The biggest thing we have learned over the years is that we need to educate employees that innovation isn’t something that ‘happens behind those doors’. Innovation is in everyone. Whether it is a product or process innovation, we all have the capability to innovate.”

In nominating Hagie Manufacturing for the award, the Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) cited the company’s history of innovation in the agricultural machinery manufacturing industry and commitment to its customers, suppliers, and employees. That innovation and commitment have resulted in the continuing growth of this family-owned business leading to the expansion of manufacturing facilities in Clarion and an increase in the workforce from 140 in 2008 to more than 300 today.

Ray Hagie founded the company as a seed corn business more than 60 years ago. When the herbicide 2,4-D was introduced, he realized there was not any equipment that could apply the product post crop emergence other than an airplane. Determined to solve the problem, Hagie retooled his detassler and built the first self-propelled high-clearance sprayer in 1947.

That spirit of innovation and determination to meet customer needs has continued ever since. Because the company recognizes employees are the key to an innovative spirit and success, time and energy has been invested in the workplace culture. Workplace changes such as flexible scheduling, complimentary beverages, and allowing employees to decorate their work areas to reflect personalities has led to a workforce of engaged employees with positive attitudes and energy that is highly contagious. “We have just scratched the surface of innovation. It is now about giving people the tools and getting out of the way,” states Alan Hagie.

In 2011 Hagie Manufacturing received the Iowa Farm Bureau's Renew Rural Iowa Leader Award in recognition of its legacy of innovation and its strong commitment to the employees. In supporting Hagie's nomination for the Excellence in Innovation Award, Iowa Farm Bureau Economic Development Administrator Sandy Ehrig wrote, "With more than 60 years of innovation, Hagie Manufacturing is a stellar example of a family-owned company that has kept its customers and rural community first. Being located in a community is not the same as being an active participant in that community. Hagie understands that distinction and has fostered its relationships with its customers and the local community to achieve success."