



# Illinois Industrial News

## Granite City Pickling Quality and Service Employs People

IIN News Service

Granite City Pickling & Warehousing, Inc. have been in operation for nine years in Granite City, IL. The company pickles approximately 200,000 tons a year of hot rolled steel coils. The line was built by Cauffiel Machinery, of Toledo, OH, which is an affiliate of Granite City Pickling.

A large, cumbersome steel mill pickle line, similar to one at a nearby steel mill, can easily cost \$50 million and can pickle coils in the neighborhood of one million tons per year. However, it cannot control the quality like the highly efficient Cauffiel push/pull pickle line. The Cauffiel system assures that the hot rolled coils are pickled without any possible defects. Hot rolled coils are used for automobile stampings such as wheels, motor mounts, and structural members as well as many other roll formed and tubular products. In the past nine years, American industry has required high quality and service from steel companies. Because of fierce competition, the American automobile industry has discovered that consistent quality will substantially improve their end product as well as reduce high production manufacturing problems.

Nine years ago, even though the steel mills had their own pickle lines, they were unable to satisfy many companies in the southern Illinois area. The Cauffiel push/pull pickle line not only allows for high quality pickling, but practices statistical process control. This includes inspecting every single coil before and after pickling, removing the crop tails, edge trimming, gauge control and monitoring, and checking for all possible defects, including coil breaks, cracks, laminations, etc. Such pickling, inspecting and monitoring requires dedicated people, computer controls for inventory and invoicing for each steel mill or each customer.

When Granite City Pickling first installed the 72" x 3/8" x 60,000 lb. coil capacity Cauffiel pickle line nine years ago, there were many stamping companies that were shut down and considering going out of business in the



Left, 72" x 3/8" x 60,000 lb. coil capacity Cauffiel pickle line.



Right, Ford B. Cauffiel, recipient of the Small Business Finance Alliance Award (SBFA).

southern Illinois area. In fact, Granite City was considered one of the most depressed areas in the U.S. The main reason was that these companies were unable to obtain a high quality, pickled product at economical prices. The steel mills were unable to supply this highly competitive product to the demanding industry. At that time, U.S. automobile manufacturers were under fierce competition from the Japanese because of Japanese automobile quality.

Mr. Cauffiel said, "The Tri-State Chamber of Commerce called me to set up a Cauffiel pickle line so the local stamping industry could compete with the northern stamping companies. At the time we moved in, we were the only pickler in the area. Soon, things began to happen, as we were able to produce high quality pickled coils." As an example, a nearby stamping company was completely shut down. At one time, they employed over 1,000 people. Many automobile steel wheel manufacturers were also about to go out of business.

The community leaders gave Ford B. Cauffiel the Small Business Finance Alliance Award (SBFA) for his outstanding contribution to the economic development of southern Illinois. They estimated that steel that sells for \$500 per ton times 250,000 tons equals \$125,000,000. The amount of increased sales was generated by steel mills in the area, which means many more people were employed by the large steel companies. The southern Illinois steel mills were not selling in the area until

Granite City Pickling became a reality nine years ago. They also added the amount of employment that was created in the area because of the metal fabrication and stamping industries. Community leaders estimated that Granite City Pickling might have created over 10,000 jobs in the area. Granite City Pickling only employs about 40 people, but they are an example of how small- and medium-sized businesses can substantially affect the employment in a particular area.

Mr. Cauffiel also states, "When you develop an area, you automatically have competition. We now are not the only pickler in the area that does a quality job, but we are the pioneers of developing high-quality pickled coils in the southern Illinois area."

There are large signs all over Granite City Pickling that say "Quality and Service". Quality and service are the key in manufacturing technology and competitiveness today. Mr. Cauffiel said, "We are proud to be a part of the U.S., which is the most productive steel maker in the world. Now that the U.S. is able to compete in the steel and automobile industry, there is no limit to what we can do in basic industry. There is no equal to the American worker if he is trained and treated with respect. Granite City Pickling prides itself on its participatory management and bonus system. They work together as a team and we furnish immediate money for any improvements so that Granite City Pickling can perform the best quality and service."