



# ABOVE & BEYOND



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- Technological Innovation & Human Expertise in Manufacturing

## EMPIRE NEWS

- Steppin' Out In Pink Fundraiser
- Upcoming Events

## SAFETY AWARENESS

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## Technological Innovation and Human Expertise in Manufacturing

[JOHN FREISMUTH]

At the heart of Empire Screen Printing's technological leap forward, we have incorporated state-of-the-art automation within our Medium Value Stream (MVS) screen printing production line, creating a profound partnership between our advancements in sustainable technology and the unparalleled skill of our employees.

As we announce our latest advancements in automation and manufacturing technology, we also celebrate the seamless integration of our team's expertise with these innovations, ensuring the highest quality in every product we deliver.

Our employees, with their talents and craftsmanship, work in perfect harmony with our automated systems. This collaboration is the cornerstone of our manufacturing process, combining the precision and efficiency of automation with the creative insight and meticulous attention to detail only human expertise can provide. This unique synergy enables Empire Screen Printing to not only meet but exceed the highest standards of quality and innovation in the printing industry.

The integration of automation in our processes – from loading and unloading the printing press, material cleaning, laminating, splitting, die-cutting, and scrap removal to the final inspection, all in a single-piece flow – is designed to enhance the capabilities of our workforce. Our

*(continued on next page)*



## TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION [CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE]

employees leverage these advanced tools to refine their craft further, applying their knowledge and creativity to oversee and complement the precision of automated technology. This approach ensures that every product benefits from the consistency of automation and the personalized touch of skilled artisans.

Our commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology and the irreplaceable skills of our employees while minimizing our ecological footprint sets us apart in the industry. This unique blend propels us to redefine the boundaries of what's possible in screen printing.

As we look to the future, our focus remains steadfast on innovation, quality, and sustainability. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and are committed to driving positive change in the printing industry and beyond.



**FANUC (BIG JIM)**



**COBOT**

### ABOUT OUR MEDIUM VALUE STREAM

Our MVS production line consists of two 18x30 presses that have integrated automation into the process. One press is a used, six-color 25x38 UV mercury press, which we converted to an 18x30 UV LED curing press. A **Fanuc Robot** was added and programmed to take sheets on and off the press and feed them through an auto-laminator. From there, the rolls are directly fed into the Preco press, where camera registration is used to cut to a tolerance of  $\pm .005"$ . Once parts are completed, they are packed and shipped.

The other press was an existing 25x38 press we already had. We adjusted the stations to the 18x30 size and integrated two **Cobots** (collaborative robots) to this press. Cobots are designed to operate safely alongside humans in a shared workspace. One Cobot places raw material on the press, and the other takes it off and feeds the printed sheets into an auto-laminator, where they are converted into rolls with either lamination or adhesive and backsplitted. At this point, they can be cut apart to be i-cut or die cut, or left on rolls to be run through a Preco press.



## STEPPIN' OUT IN PINK FUNDRAISER

Empire is excited to be a **silver sponsor** for this year's **Steppin' Out In Pink Fundraiser**. We are donating \$3,000 and providing two different decals for the organization to sell the day of the event.

Steppin' Out in Pink is a non-competitive fundraising walk for all ages and abilities. It raises money to support breast cancer research and patient support programs at Gundersen Health System's Norma J. Vinger Center for Breast Care.

The research being done at Gundersen will change the way breast cancer is treated locally and nationally. Since 2006, Steppin' Out in Pink has raised over \$7 million for local breast cancer initiatives.

**This year's event will take place on September 14th at Riverside Park, La Crosse, Wisconsin. The vendor market opens at 7:00 am, and the race officially kicks off at 9:00 am. There is a 4- or 5-mile walk option. See posters for more details.**

As a silver sponsor, **Empire has 20 spots for any employee** who wishes to participate in the walk and support this great cause. Each walker will get a Steppin' Out in Pink t-shirt and registration fee will be waived. **Sign-up sheets are in the lunchrooms** (Empire will register all employees). If you plan on having family or friends walk with you, they will need to register and pay for their own ticket at:

<https://steppinoutinpink.donordrive.com/> (or scan the barcode below).

*Let's Make a Difference!*



## STEPPIN' OUT IN PINK

Gundersen Medical Foundation

**September 14th | Riverside Park, La Crosse, WI**

**4 or 5 mile walk • Walk starts at 9:00am**

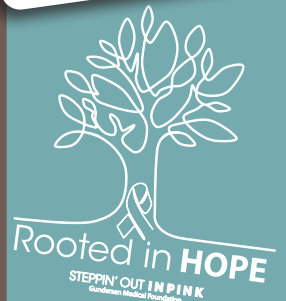


# SIGN UP TODAY!!



# EMPIRE NEWS

**DECALS BEING  
SOLD**



**FAMILY/FRIENDS:  
SCAN THE BARCODE  
TO SIGN UP FOR THE  
EVENT**



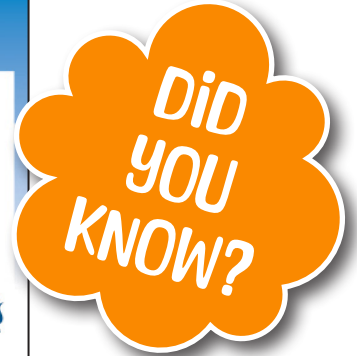
## FIRE SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE [CATHY BUTTELL]

Some of the information in this article can be found on the website:  
<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/workplace-fires/>



**Did you know:** There were 16,500 office and store fires in the United States in 2020 that caused \$932 million in direct property damage.

A fire in an office or store can be devastating to your community. In addition to potential deaths and property loss, people may lose their jobs and the community may lose a vital service provided by the businesses.



### How to stay safe at work:

- Know what your company's **Emergency Action Plan** is if there is a fire.  
*At Empire, our EAP can be found in QMS / Policies / Safety / Emergency Action Plan folder.*
- Create an emergency response team that is responsible for specific tasks.
- Schedule regular fire training: learn the evacuation routes, and have a designated area to go outside of the building. Have someone in your department keep track of personnel to make sure everyone got out of the building safely.
- Check with your local fire department to see if they are willing to come out and train employees on fire extinguishers.
- Know where the fire alarms are located in your building.
- Make sure fire escape plans are posted in every section or level of a building.
- Know where exit locations are, along with escape routes, and where to find fire protection equipment and fire extinguishers when applicable.

If you are a new employee or aren't familiar with your company's protocol, make sure you talk to your supervisor. Being prepared is the best way to stay safe!



## SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY [CATHY BUTTELL]

When warm weather comes along, it's a great time to enjoy the outdoors. But it can also bring severe weather that can show up unexpectedly and quickly. Being prepared both at home and at work will help keep your family and fellow employees safe when those storms hit.



# SAFETY AWARENESS

### How to stay safe at work:

Some of the information in this article can be found on the website:

<https://www.mscdirect.com/betterMRO/safety/severe-weather-preparedness-workplace>

- Know what your company's **Emergency Action Plan** is if there is severe weather. *At Empire, our EAP can be found in QMS / Policies / Safety / Emergency Action Plan folder.*
- Create an emergency response team that is responsible for specific tasks.
- Schedule regular severe weather training: know what the emergency alarm system sounds like, and have a designated area inside the building.
- Have someone in your department keep track of personnel to make sure everyone is safely located within that designated area.

### How to stay safe at home:

Some of the information in this article can be found on the website:

<https://www.weather.gov/ama/severesafetytips>

- Make sure you have a safety plan and that everyone in the family knows what it is.
- Practice the safety plan at least twice a year.
- A battery-operated or emergency weather radio can be a good resource to keep track of the weather in case the power grid goes down.
- Remember to **GET IN / GET DOWN / COVER UP**
  - » **GET IN:** If you are outside, get inside. If you're already inside, get as far into the middle of the building as possible.
  - » **GET DOWN:** Get underground if possible. If you can't, go to the lowest floor possible.
  - » **COVER UP:** Flying and falling debris are a storm's number one killer. Use pillows, blankets, coats, helmets, etc. to cover up and protect your head and body from flying debris.

By following these simple guidelines, you can protect yourself, your family, and your co-workers from nature's most violent storms. Enjoy the nice weather, but be safe!



### SAFETY COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

Keith Cook ----- R&D

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nancy Gilbertson ----- Customer Service  
Curtis Johnson ----- I.T.  
Tom Donaldson ----- Digital Manager

Theresa Antony ----- SVS Operator  
Bob Fischer ----- SVS Operator  
Mike Wakeen ----- Director of Manufacturing

### SAFETY COMMITTEE







## EARTH DAY AT EMPIRE [CATHY BUTTELL]

At Empire, we celebrate Earth Week by doing a spring clean-up day on the outside of our premises. On April 25th, 15 employees enjoyed a beautiful day while making our environment a little cleaner. They collected 30 pounds of trash!



### Thanks to the following employees:

Emily Syring ..... (HT 1st)  
 Keith Cook.....(R&D 1st)  
 Dalton Johnson.....(MVS 2nd)  
 Anita Johnson .....(Doming 2nd)  
 Egan Shanley ..... (Janitor 1st)  
 Zach Johnson .....(LVS 2nd)  
 Britney Henkel.....(MVS 2nd)  
 Becca Bridges .....(SVS 1st)  
 Rachelle Craig.....(SVS 1st)  
 Scott Smith.....(LVS 1st)  
 Curtis Johnson .....(IT 1st)  
 Kathy Vaughan .....(HR 1st)  
 Joe Piper ..... (Eng. 1st)  
 Jenny Ledman.....(Art 1st)  
 Jen Schloesser .....(Art 1st)



# WORKING TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED ESG

[JENNIFER SCHLOESSER & CATHY BUTTELL]

For the last ten years, Empire has been a Green Tier participant through the Wisconsin DNR. Our **Environmental Management System (EMS)** requires us to provide an annual report of our company's environmental impact, but with the growing acceptance of ESG (environmental, social, governance) we were inspired to expand our report. Our EMS has been the cornerstone of our environmental stewardship, driving us to minimize our ecological footprint while enhancing operational efficiency. The lessons learned and successes garnered from this system provided us with a unique vantage point to expand our focus. By incorporating these insights into a broader ESG framework, we are not just adhering to global standards, but also setting new benchmarks in sustainable business practices.

In the United States, the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) is requiring publicly-traded companies to provide information based on ESG practices that may be important to investors. Although Empire is not a publicly held company and is not required to provide this information, we felt it was important to work towards a functioning ESG report in conjunction with our core values.

In 2023, we took the approach of expanding on our DNR Green Tier EMS report to incorporate social and governance to make this an all-encompassing **ESG annual report**. This information guides our organization towards the future.

The development of our ESG manual report is a testament to this commitment. It will serve as a comprehensive guide, outlining our strategies and objectives in managing environmental risks, fostering social responsibility, and ensuring robust governance. This report reflects our dedication to sustainability and will also articulate our approach to addressing the intricate challenges of the modern business landscape.

As we embark on this journey, our goal is to create a framework that resonates with all our stakeholders – from employees and customers to suppliers and the broader community. We believe that by integrating our EMS into a full-fledged ESG report, we are taking a significant step forward in aligning our business operations with the broader societal goals of sustainable development and responsible corporate citizenship.

Our ESG report can be found on our website: [empirescreen.com](http://empirescreen.com)



## SUSTAINABILITY NEWS



### GREEN COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

Jennifer Schloesser ----- Creative Director

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cathy Buttell ----- Project Manager

Keith Cook ----- R&D

Jeff Gierok ----- Electrical Technician

### GREEN COMMITTEE







## EMPLOYEE FAREWELLS • STEVE LECHNIR

Congratulations to **STEVE LECHNIR** (ink department) on his retirement after **24 years at Empire**. Have fun with all the new exciting experiences coming your way!



## EMPLOYEE FAREWELLS • SHANE HULBURT

After **30 years at Empire**, **SHANE HULBURT** (doming department) has moved on to other opportunities. We wish him the best of luck!





## MARCH MADNESS WINNERS

Congratulations to our March Madness winners. Each winner received a traveling trophy.

1st Place..... Kevin Gerstenberger

2nd Place .....Jennifer Schloesser

3rd Place..... Nancy Gilbertson

Thank you to all who participated!



## EMPLOYEE NEWS



## BINGO WINNERS

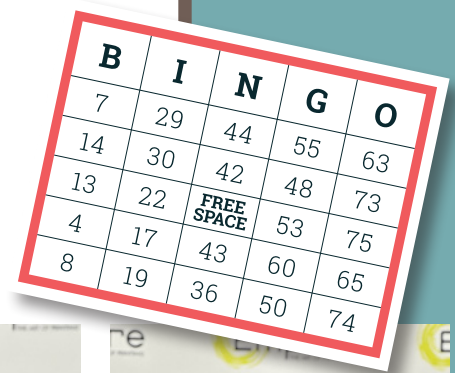
Congratulations to our Bingo winners. All winners received \$20.

1st Round..... Keith Cook

2nd Round.....Dawn McGraph & Rhonda Peterson

3rd Round .....Joann Anderson

Thank you to all who participated!





## WALKING LOOPS AT EMPIRE [CATHY BUTTELL]

Whether you are getting ready for the **Steppin' Out in Pink Fundraiser**, trying to get healthier, or just need some fresh air, Empire is a great place to go for a walk during your break or before/after work. We measured out three different walking routes around Empire so you can keep track of how far you're going. You might even see some nature in the process (walkers have been known to see turkeys, indigo bunting birds, and deer).

Enjoy the great weather and take a walk!

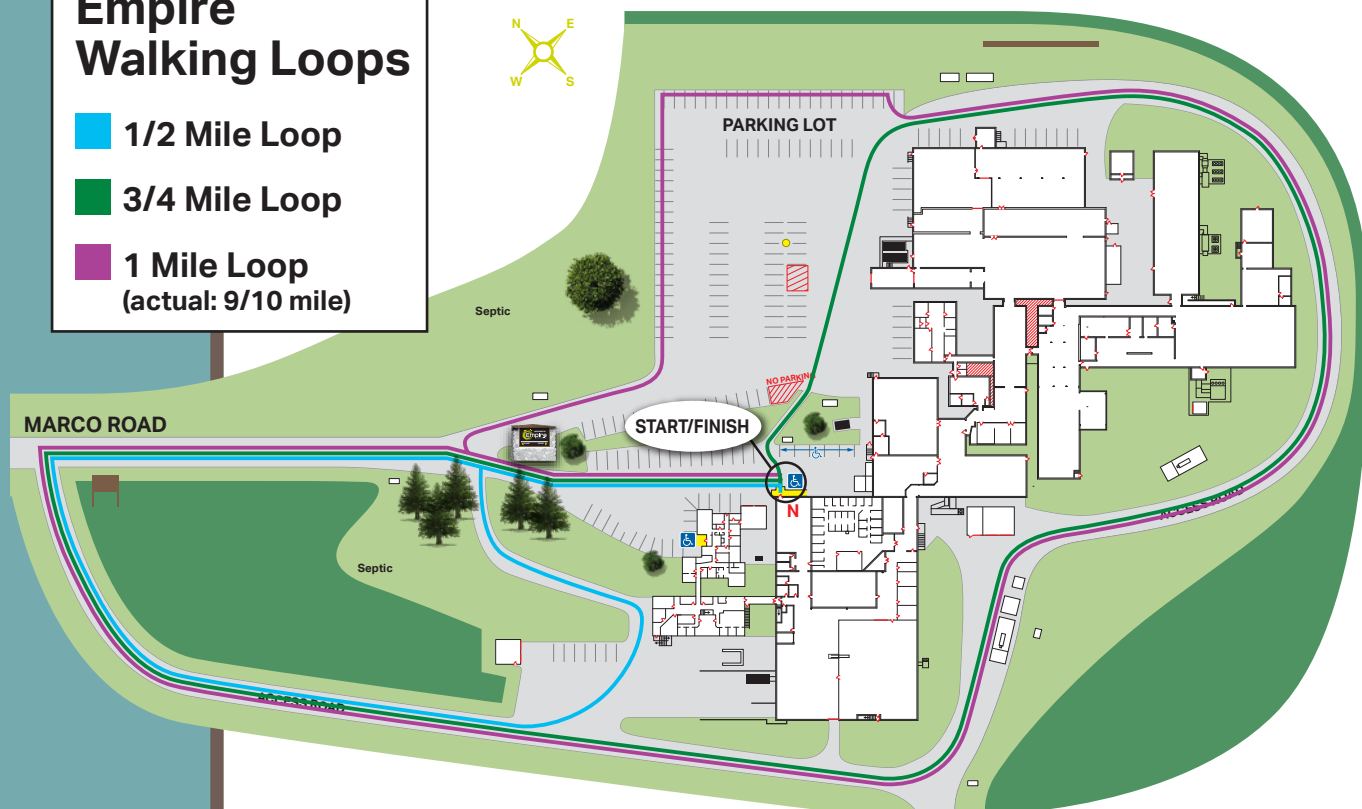


### Empire Walking Loops

■ 1/2 Mile Loop

■ 3/4 Mile Loop

■ 1 Mile Loop  
(actual: 9/10 mile)







# UPCOMING EVENTS



EMPIRE NEWS

**AUG**  
17

## COMPANY PICNIC

Veteran's Memorial Park, West Salem  
12:00 pm - 3:30 pm

*\*RSVP due by July 25<sup>th</sup>\**



## CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST "AROUND THE WORLD"

See posters for  
more information

*\*Deadline is August 29<sup>th</sup>\**



**AUG**  
29

**OCT**  
31

## HALLOWEEN

Halloween Contest  
& more!



## CHRISTMAS PARTY

Stoney Creek Inn  
Onalaska, Wisconsin



**DEC**  
13

# ANNIVERSARIES & NEW EMPLOYEES

## JANUARY

Name	# of Years
Randall Hoff.....	35
Christopher Mikunda .....	26
Jennifer Schloesser .....	24
Mai Khang.....	17
Eric Wienkes.....	16
Richard Burg.....	10
Steve Limpert .....	7
Carol Tollefson.....	6
Emily Syring.....	6
Cody Volden.....	6
Phillip Treu.....	3
Sarah Haskins.....	2

## FEBRUARY

Name	# of Years
John Freismuth.....	32
Guy Gregerson.....	28
Angela Severson .....	20
Stacie Boisen .....	17
Daniel Poff.....	15
Georgina Cundy-Lalande...	6
Lakota Standing Bear .....	3
Rita Howe .....	2

## MARCH

Name	# of Years
James Schwinefus.....	53
Clark Martin .....	35
Sherri Vinson .....	31
Jeffrey Gierok .....	31
Daniel Metz .....	31
Jessica Kamrowski .....	28
Petra Vogel.....	27
Vanessa Fox.....	23
Andrew Kiedrowski .....	18
Cindy Brush.....	14

## MARCH

Name	# of Years
Alexis Marsh .....	10
Walter Staff.....	9
Crystal Monn .....	5
Jared Ball.....	4
Sarah Sauers .....	2
Egan Shanley .....	1

## APRIL

Name	# of Years
Troy Stockers .....	34
Kevin Mason .....	32
Randall Lemke .....	32
Jennifer Ledman.....	31
William Feyen.....	26
Rhonda Peterson.....	17
Rebecca Wurzel .....	14
Teri Herold.....	14
Curtis Johnson.....	14
Richard McDowell.....	14
James Owsley.....	7
Patricia Wells.....	5
Jory Stall .....	5
Gregory Peterson.....	5
Sharon Ronnie.....	3
Eric Olson .....	2

## MAY

Name	# of Years
Travis Brush .....	34
Lisa Massoth.....	34
Samuel Sokolik .....	31
Sheldon True .....	27
Thomas Donaldson.....	27
Debra Gilbertson.....	27
Katie Schaller .....	19
Autum Jacobs.....	16

## MAY

Name	# of Years
Jacky Vue.....	11
Kiecila Fruetel .....	10
Cory Krajewski.....	8
Brenda Hansen .....	7
Diana Kurtz .....	6
Megan Dickerson-Caacbay ..	6
Nicholas Lubinsky.....	3
Jordan Witt .....	3
Daric Olson .....	1

## JUNE

Name	# of Years
Dawn Gorniak.....	40
Debbra Michel.....	39
Russell Kuehn .....	29
Rebecca Stark.....	28
Sheila Albers .....	25
Robert Fischer.....	22
Matthew Vanderloop.....	20
Carina Olson .....	18
Sarah Erickson .....	17
Rebecca Burg.....	13
Codi Jacobs.....	12
Britney Henkel.....	9
Ronnie Tilson .....	8
Charles Beck.....	8
Audra Moline .....	8
Bradley Ames .....	7
Raven Erickson.....	3
Bradley Cook.....	3
Ethan Anderson .....	2
Rebecca Bridges .....	1
Dylan Spranger .....	1
Mark Klinski.....	1



## NEW EMPLOYEES

Kristy Borger  
 Peter Brenegen  
 Michael Christner  
 Jonathan Ferris  
 Miley Freismuth  
 Traevonne Fruetel  
 Timothy Kurtz  
 Paula Price  
 Cassandra Rehfuss  
 Sayla Remen  
 Sherri Schueler  
 Ryan Sjuggerud  
 Scott Smith  
 Brian Subjek  
 Andrea Vinson

**Deadline for the next  
newsletter: 12/01/2024**

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