

**Dotson**  
**IRON**  
**CASTINGS**

# DOTSON DIFFERENCE

*becoming the world's most automated jobbing foundry*

**MACHINING SERVICES COMING SOON!**

**July 21, 2010**



## My Voice

**Mark Maas**  
**Machining Manager**

In today's economic environment, with America's manufacturing sector struggling to retain jobs and profitability, news of a foundry starting its own machining department spread quickly.

My former employer had succumbed to the recession and was forced to close his doors, so when I heard that Dotson was looking for a Machining Manager to start the department from scratch, my first thought was, "What a great opportunity." Knowing little of Dotson at the time, I was soon to learn of the Dotson Difference.

This was not to be "your father's machine shop," this was not a garage startup nor was it to be a collection of cast off equipment gathered in a corner of the plant. In this case, the Dotson Difference was the Dotson diligence. Countless hours of research, planning and effort have gone into developing a machining department stocked with state-of-the-art Haas mills and lathes.

Continuing the Dotson initiative to reduce paper, all tool lists, setup sheets, part prints, inspection reports, etc. are paperless and easily referenced using touchscreen stations at each machine.

With the latest technology, including a new Zeiss coordinate measuring machine, Dotson's quality assurance department ensures the highest standards are maintained in supplying our customers with complete, machined iron castings.

## Bio: Mark Maas

Mark Maas is the manager of Dotson's newly formed machining department and is responsible for implementing Dotson's long term machining plans. Mark comes to Dotson with a background in machining, die and fixture design, and process engineering; primarily in the die casting industry. While the sand casting process is new territory for him, Mark has long been a fan of cast iron. "I collect antique gas engines which are made almost exclusively of cast iron. There's something about the substance and durability of iron that you don't get with other materials and processes."

## Dotson Establishing Machining Department! New Service Offering to Provide Big Benefits for Customers

Watching machining operations over the past few years (in both boom and bust periods) and purchasing millions in value added services from dozens of suppliers, has given us a good appreciation for the frustrations that many OEM buyers have when purchasing casting from one source and machining from another source. Most of our suppliers are excellent. However, it is not uncommon for machining operations to be so concerned with machine utilization that their goal is to see 30 boxes of castings behind every machine. Others don't even want to put the order into their schedule until the castings arrive in their shop.

Dotson's philosophy is to make "flow" the primary driver in our shop – making sure that boxes of castings are not waiting. Now, with the addition of a machining department, machining will start within hours of the casting being poured. This value stream mapping approach takes many of the typical waste areas out of the value chain (waiting, freight, communication, arguments, multiple markups, etc.).

Another important philosophy for this new operation is that it will not be set up as a separate profit center at Dotson. We will most certainly keep track of costs but the machining department will be treated the same as our core department or the melt department. All departments are essential to producing an economic part. The advantage to the customer is a fully machined casting with a single markup.



## Experience is the Difference

### New Machinists Provide Valuable Expertise

With over 25 years experience each, our first newly hired machinists have the skills to provide an immediate impact.

Chad Lanz's experience includes owning a production machine shop, which he had to close during the downturn. "When I interviewed for the position at Dotson I was pretty excited," Chad admitted, "I was looking for a job and to be able to work in a position that happens to be my strong suit will be great!"



Dave Lietzan worked for almost 25 year in production machining at a Caterpillar plant until it was closed in 2007. He then spent a couple of years at a small precision machining operation. Dave is looking forward to working at Dotson. "It is going to be really interesting, I can't wait to get to work," he said.

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## Quality Built-in at the Beginning

Mark Rinehart joins the machining department with 15 years of precision quality work at several OEMs and machine shops. "It feels really good to join Dotson," Mark said. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity of getting in on the ground floor of the new machining department. I always enjoy a good challenge. It is especially great to have all new equipment like the Zeiss CMM."

One huge advantage of having on-site machining (just a few feet from where the casting is poured) is that any potential quality problems are very quickly resolved.



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## The Right Partner Makes All the Difference

A nice thing about starting a new "greenfield" operation is that you get to decide what partners to work with. Dotson decided that the machines and support offered by Minnesota based Productivity Inc. was a perfect fit as we created a facility that was designed 100% for our less than 55-pound iron castings.

Through endless meetings, the dream began to take shape. Productivity even sat in on the interviews for the machining manager. Productivity's objective of "helping precision manufacturing companies produce globally sourced products better and faster, with lower overall cost" is definitely guiding Dotson's path on this new venture.



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