SKF EXPANDS SERVICES WITH ACQUISITION OF ILLINOIS-BASED PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE CO.

In a move expected to strengthen SKF's position in reliability services, condition monitoring products, maintenance strategies and consulting services, the company's subsidiary SKF USA Inc. has acquired Preventive Maintenance Company Inc. (PMCI), of Elk Grove Village, IL. PMCI has 70 employees and annual sales of approximately $10 million. It specializes in predictive maintenance (PdM) services for industrial customers throughout the Pulp & Paper, Metals, Food, Automotive and other industry sectors.

The growing trend in contract reliability services continues to drive double-digit growth in this area, and the strength of PMCI will help position SKF to meet these market demands. SKF intends to use PMCI's expertise in vibration data collections and analysis, balancing, alignment, ultrasonics, lubrication sampling and thermography to create a primary service delivery organization.

According to Bart Bartholomew, vice president of SKF Service Sales in North America, the addition of PMCI to SKF's Reliability Service business significantly expands his organization's geographic coverage for the delivery of SKF knowledge to key customers at the foundational service level of predictive maintenance.

HYDRAULIC INSTITUTE INVITES NEW "STANDARDS PARTNERS"

The Hydraulic Institute (HI) is now offering the opportunity for engineering consultants and pump users to participate as "HI Standards Partners." As a Standards Partner, North American corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships and government agencies that are engineering firms, provide engineering services or are end-users of pumps are eligible to receive a valuable package of HI products and services.

Mechanical Solutions, Inc., a Whippany-NJ-based engineering research and consulting firm active in the pump, compressor and turbine industries, is the first organization to become an HI Standards Partner. Headed by William D. "Bill" Marscher, a past president of STLE, Mechanical Solutions offers analysis, testing and troubleshooting services in a number of areas, including tribological component analysis.

To qualify as a Standards Partner, organizations or individuals will need to establish that they

provide pump and pumping system engineering, process or facility design, procurement, project management, construction services, hydraulic or mechanical modeling, analytical methods or laboratory or field-testing to a facility owner, government or vendor, or that they are an end-user of pumps themselves.

For more information, visit www.pumps.org

FORD MOTOR CO. DONATES $150K TO SME IN SUPPORT OF THE FUTURE OF ENGINEERING

Reinforcing its 25-year commitment to the education of its future workforce, the Ford Motor Company has awarded two grants, totaling $150,000, to the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) Education Foundation. Since 1981, Ford has donated $1,608,000 to the SME Education Foundation for scholarships and other engineering education programs.

"Once again, Ford has demonstrated its leadership in supporting and advancing industry by investing in the future of the manufacturing skilled workforce," the Foundation's president Glen H. Pearson noted. "Ford's ongoing support of the SME Education Foundation's programs gives young people positive, hands-on manufacturing experiences and exposes them to exciting careers in math, science and technology."

One grant awards $100,000 to support the SME Education Foundation's Science Technology & Engineering Preview Summer (STEPS) Program at the University of Detroit Mercy. STEPS is a one-week summer camp that gives middle-school students a look into the exciting world of science and technology through hands-on activities. This early exposure helps young people plan ahead and take the necessary courses in high school to prepare them for engineering degree programs.

With Ford's past contributions, the University of Detroit Mercy's STEPS camps have introduced 427 young students to the possibility of pursuing an engineering career at an affordable cost to the students.

An additional $50,000 grant will fund the SME Education Foundation's Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) Scholarship, a grant that has funded the education of eight students to date. The SME Ford PAS Scholarship is awarded to graduating students of the Ford PAS

program-a high school curriculum created by Ford that links classroom learning with the challenges students will face in post-secondary education and the workplace. Former PAS students who are applying to college and want to pursue a degree in technology or engineering can apply for the annual $10,000 PAS Scholarship, which can be used at any accredited college or university in the United States.

For more information about these and other programs, go to www.sme.org/foundation

OOOOOOPS!

In some program materials for the 2007 Maintenance & Reliability Technology Summit (MARTS), the terms "Maintenance Technician Effectiveness," "Overall Maintenance Effectiveness" and their acronyms, MTE and OME, should have been identified with the registered service mark symbol (SM). All of these terms are service marks of LAI Reliability Systems, Inc.

PLANNED REFINERY UNIT TURNAROUNDS CONTINUE TO DECREASE FOR 2007

According to research by Industrial Info Resources (Sugar Land, TX), the number of planned unit maintenance shutdowns for the North American Petroleum Refining Industry will decrease in 2007, marking the second year in a row for declining planned maintenance. This trend is forecast to change in 2008 as refiners schedule maintenance shutdowns to coincide with the first wave of unit additions associated with an industry-wide plan to increase refining capacity.

A number of key issues have combined to reduce the number of planned refinery unit turnarounds over the past two years including, labor shortages, prolonged longlead equipment delivery times, hurricanes, and strong profit margins. After hurricane Katrina shut down a good portion of U.S. Gulf Coast refining capacity in September 2005, the White House asked U.S. refiners to postpone scheduled maintenance in order to keep production at a high level. That trend has continued today. The number of units scheduled for planned maintenance repairs during the second half of 2006 at refineries located in North America is down by 8% as compared to the same period in 2005. This decrease in activity is arguably being attributed to several different events that occurred over the last year following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Labor shortages play a role

Some maintenance projects are being delayed and rescheduled because of a shortage of labor coming from skilled craftsmen such as iron workers, millwrights, pipefitters and electricians. Companies that provide personnel for construction, as well as equipment service providers, are

having difficulties meeting demand. Historically, slow petrochemical construction markets over the past decade led to a downsizing of the service industry.

Now, with industrial project activity picking up significantly, not only in the petrochemical sector, but across most sectors such as Power and Metals & Minerals Industries, equipment and service providers are having difficulty keeping up with increased demand. Long-lead delivery times are out as far as two years for some equipment such as pressurized reactors and vessels, and the labor pool is running thin. Deer Park Refining LP (Deer Park, Texas) rescheduled a $35-million fall 2006 turnaround to January 2007.

Other factors

Another factor that may have contributed to the decrease is that there were a significant amount of shutdowns scheduled earlier last year in order for refineries to upgrade process units to produce ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) by the mandated June 2006 deadline. A majority of the refiners scheduled ULSD project tie-ins during this timeframe, resulting in some turnarounds that were originally scheduled for 2007 to occur in 2006.

For 2007, there are currently 257 units planned to be taken offl ine for maintenance repair and overhaul. That's a decrease of 21% when compared to the 328 units that went down for repair in 2006.

Opportunities in unscheduled repair services

In addition to planned maintenance, there are also opportunities to provide services for unscheduled repairs. Since 2003, there has been an average of 65 process units per month that have been shut down for unplanned reasons. A majority of the units were shut down due to a glitch in the process, but other reasons include fires, hurricane preparation and economic slowdowns.

Looking beyond 2008, refinery maintenance activity is forecast to increase significantly. In a continent-wide trend to increase refining capacity and improve unit efficiencies, the nation's refineries are planning a large number of unit additions, expansions and upgrades. Over the past year, Industrial Info has reported 430 projects at U.S. petroleum refineries, with a total investment value of $19.8 billion. Scheduled construction starts for these projects range between November 2005 and April 2012.

About Industrial Info Resources

Industrial Info Resources (IIR) is a Marketing Information Service company that has been doing business for over 23 years. IIR is respected as the leader in providing comprehensive market intelligence pertaining to the industrial processing, heavy manufacturing and energyrelated industries throughout the world. For additional information, send inquiries to refininggroup@industrialinfo.com , or visit the organization online at www.industrialinfo.com