

Michigan Fluid Power

In the heavy manufacturing industry, there are only three ways to move objects—air power (pneumatics), hydraulic

oil power (hydraulics), and mechanically (wheels and sprockets, etc.)—Michigan Fluid Power is a master of utilizing pneumatics and hydraulics. Located in Grandville, Michigan Fluid Power (MFP) has always been and continues to be a leader and innovator in hydraulic and pneumatic systems design and manufacturing.

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Founded in 1991 by Roger L. Betten, Sr., David M. Grimm, and Rodney R. Kowalski, MFP has grown from three employees and \$200,000 in sales in 1991 to forty-seven employees with over \$15 million in sales.

All three original partners got their start in the hydraulics business at Fauver Co. where they learned the fluid power business from John Fauver. However, when Fauver sold

his company to Sunoco, the three men decided to start their own business. Working for a public corporation headquartered in Philadelphia where management decisions were driven by quarterly earnings rather than long-term growth did not appeal to them. So, they formed Michigan Fluid Power, Inc.

Betten had worked at Fauver for 29 years. When he and his partners left Fauver, many customers followed them and have stayed with them ever since. In 1992, Roger Betten, Jr. joined the company and together the owners represent over 75 years of experience in the fluid power industry.

MFP is a major fluid power & motion control components distributor. MFP holds franchises from and is a leading distributor for Parker Hannifin, a cutting-edge hydraulics components provider, Lincoln Lubrication, and Ace Controls.

Parker Hannifin makes custom pumps for MFP that idle at 100 pounds of

pressure and offer additional energy cost savings in MFP-designed systems. Lincoln Lubrication manufactures automatic grease systems for tractor-trailer trucks and heavy construction equipment that dispense precise amounts of grease at regular intervals to every bearing, and MFP offers both onsite and in-house installation of those systems. Ace Controls supplies industrial shock absorbers and deceleration devices.

Besides selling a high volume of these components, MFP uses them in the manufacture and assembly of the systems they design and build. Although MFP's main business is as a fluid power sales distributor—MFP maintains over a million dollars of fluid power components in inventory—it has the in-house capability to design and manufacture fluid power systems and custom manifold assemblies. Over 40 percent of MFP's employees are involved in the design, manufacturing, and installation of entire hydraulic and pneumatic



The owners from left to right: Dave Grimm, Roger Betten Jr., Rod Kowalski, and Roger Betten Sr.

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MFP's over 20,000 ft. facility located in Grandville, Michigan.



control systems.

MFP is the leading source for heavy-duty machines that require the strength that only fluid power can provide. MFP engineers and builds hydraulic systems for demanding customer applications. For instance, a customer may need a system with 10 tons of force to push a part through a machine in a second and a half that also has part loading and clamping capabilities. MFP builds over 500 custom hydraulic systems a year and specializes in big industrial systems with 50-, 75-, 100-, or 200-horse power. Its typical customers use MFP's hydraulic systems to make and supply the widgets that, for example, go into automobiles or large appliances.

MFP provides custom power units, custom manifolds and valve packages, engineered assemblies, hydraulic/lubrication system installation, air/liquid filled gauges, and unparalleled customer support through its Hydraulic Tech Center and Pneumatic Tech Center. In addition to hydraulic and pneumatic capabilities, Michigan Fluid Power also offers a full

line of electro-mechanical solutions. Whether your industry involves heavy duty industrial or clean room environment the Parker electro-mechanical product line has a solution for your motion application.

MFP's 20,000 square foot facility houses an engineering office, a machine shop, a manufacturing and assembly area, a staging and testing area, and a warehouse holding over a million dollars of parts in inventory.

MFP also offers onsite customer service and installation of fluid power equipment and components, including repairs and upgrades, at customer facilities. And, in January, 2007, MFP opened a fluid power retail store to offer its customers immediate access to over 3,000 parts in stock, onsite services such as "while you wait" hose assemblies and custom tube bending, and face-to-face engineering assistance and systems evaluation. Adjacent to the Grandville facility, the store, called the Parker Store, is sponsored by Parker Hannifin.

Michigan Fluid Power rewards its employees with performance bonuses, a pleasant working



One of many installation vehicles for Michigan Fluid Power.

environment, and a great compensation package that includes excellent training and cross-training opportunities. MFP pays 100 percent of employees' trade school programs and provides some reimbursement for related college or university courses. MFP rarely advertises its job openings—their future employees are referred by current employees or hear about openings from them. MFP prefers to recruit its employees right out of college or high school and have them complete a two-year, in-house apprenticeship program to learn the hydraulic business.

Highly rated by Dunn & Bradstreet, MFP remains privately held and is still run by its three cofounders and Roger Betten, Jr.

In recognition of its solid growth, ingenuity, innovation in workforce recruitment, development and retention, and contributions to the community, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce named Michigan Fluid Power, Inc. as one of four recipients of its 1999 Small Business of the Year award.

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Michigan Fluid Power's customer service department.

