

PARTNERING *with* CUSTOMERS

Written by Robert Hoshowsky

Business success comes from a commitment to quality, working closely with customers, and the ability to pivot—just a few of the many attributes that have made Beckwood Press Company the success it is today.

Founded in 1976 by Charles P. Becker, Jr., the business started in a different industry, making high-end inserts for wood-burning fireplaces. Realizing he needed press equipment to make some components, Becker decided to build his own press

equipment in-house. Customers needing inserts started asking Becker to manufacture presses for them, which led to the company making a bold shift from fireplace inserts to focusing only on presses.

As one of America's foremost press manufacturers, the company continues growing. Under the highly experienced leadership of CEO and President Jeff Debus, who joined the business in 1992, Beckwood is renowned for innovations that benefit all its customers. ➤





► More than machinery

Some companies simply sell presses—not Beckwood. A world-class manufacturer of hydraulic and servo-electric presses, automation systems, and hydroforming equipment, Beckwood is backed by a team of seasoned engineers who love a challenge. As the company boldly states on its website, “Our mission is to build and deliver better solutions that enable manufacturers to succeed,” and the company continues to live up to client expectations every single day.

Serving customers in industries such as aerospace, automotive, defense, medical, energy, and food and beverage, to name a few, Beckwood stays ahead of the competition through innovation. In fact, the company is in the unique position of respecting the past while embracing the future. Behind a line of high-quality hydraulic presses, the company is also embracing servo-electric technology, which merges hydraulic press flexibility with exceptional servo-mechanical press performance.

This customer-centric team services include equipment maintenance, spare parts, and a retrofit division. “We can take someone’s existing hydraulic press if the frame and structure are good, take the hydraulics off, and put servo-electric on there,” says Sales Manager Caleb Dixon, “and you almost have a brand-new technology press for a fraction of the cost.”

Providing custom and standard hydraulic press models for every application from one to 10,000-plus tons, the company is increasingly known for its servo-electric technology. This includes its linear servo press (LSP™ for short) press models, along with Beckwood’s EVOx™ line of servo-electric presses. Extremely precise, reliable, and energy-efficient, the company’s LSP line represents “a new era of servo-electric press technology that combines the flexibility of hydraulic presses with the performance of servo-mechanical presses.” Offering the highest degree of precise repeatability, the EVOx™ line is able to form parts to within a tolerance of ± 0.0005 ” and offers force and positional feedback at a rate of one sample per millisecond.

Available in models ranging from 5,000 lbf (2.5 ton) 6-inch or 12-inch stroke/12-inch daylight to 100,000 lbf (50 ton) 12-inch or 24-inch stroke/24-inch daylight, EVOx standard models are fully configurable to meet every need. They are also better for the environment.

“It really places into the higher-level initiatives everyone is trying to work toward, green initiatives and reducing carbon footprint,” comments Dixon of the presses, which are cleaner, energy-efficient, precise, and reliable. “So when you check all





those boxes, you can open up a different space. Traditionally, it's always been hydraulic and mechanical presses; now, there is something in between. It takes the best of both worlds that we can offer at a wider scope, higher tonnage, and faster speed. If you fast-forward five or 10 years, that's going to be the preferred manufacturing method or pressing method, especially for 500 tons, maybe even 1,000 tons and under." Both presses are featured on the company's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NttQB7-PAhY>.

To ensure Beckwood remains an industry leader, the company's team includes dedicated mechanical and structural engineers, hydraulic-specific engineers for hydraulic equipment, and electrical controls engineers working on innovative, patented products.

"We cover all three bases of projects within our engineering department," says Dixon. "I like to think we are far ahead of everyone else. At the lower tonnage ranges, 30 tons and under, more and more companies are getting into it. Part of our initiative getting different patents in place was to be able to provide 500 tons right now, and maybe leapfrog up to 1,000. When you do that with a common setup you move really slowly, and it's really expensive to do so. So the design we came up with combats both of those. It can be price-competitive with other pressing methods, and also, you still can have faster cycle rates and increase production rates and throughput." ▶



▶ Beckwood advantages

Backed by decades of experience and ingenuity—and working in so many diverse markets—helps make Beckwood fearless when tackling challenging projects. Confident in its approach, Beckwood continues creating a new space in the press industry with its servo-electric technology. The company has been manufacturing servo-electric presses for almost a decade, and its recent patents will see the business deliver machinery of even higher tonnage. “That’s a huge benefit, and something we see as the future of the press industry,” states Dixon. “We are leading the charge.”

Another advantage for customers that comes from working with Beckwood is service. The company recognizes that it can be challenging to find qualified people, so by partnering with customers and providing hands-off solutions, they don’t have to worry about reliability, uptime, or having the correct maintenance personnel on site to take care of equipment. “We can be that partner for them in that regard with our service offerings and our service team,” says Dixon.

Yet another advantage for buyers is that Beckwood’s products are proudly made in the USA. From servo-electric presses to hydraulic presses and hydroforming equipment, manufacturing at the company’s 55,000-square-foot St. Louis, Missouri headquarters shows a further commitment to reshoring and strengthening the American economy. During the pandemic, many companies and their customers suffered from supply chain issues and a lack of parts. Making products in-house means greater quality control, accountability, and presses made to last.

“The company is in the unique position of respecting the past while embracing the future.”

All these factors and others make Beckwood a preferred supplier for the American government. This includes defense, encompassing air, land, and sea. Says Dixon, “Our equipment tends to lend itself very well to that space.”



Diverse markets

About 30 to 40 percent of Beckwood's business is in aerospace and defense, and the rest is spread out over a variety of industries. Being involved in many markets means the company is not financially dependent on any one sector, and can take technology and lessons learned from one market and transplant them to another to drive new processes in different spaces.

In aerospace, Beckwood is one of only two companies in the world offering sheet hydroforming equipment, "a metal forming process that uses pressurized hydraulic fluid in a flexible diaphragm to shape sheet metal against a single, un-mated tool." Highly effective and able to replace other metal forming processes, sheet hydroforming sees metals like aluminum, titanium, and Inconel made into unique, complex shapes. "That's one thing in the aerospace industry in particular that makes Beckwood unique," says Dixon. "You can't go and source all these different pieces of equipment from any other company in the world. So we are really the one-stop shop for aerospace and defense manufacturers from an equipment standpoint."

Selling most built-to-order products directly to consumers, the company also has some standard product lines with shorter lead times. The core of Beckwood's business is tailoring products to customers' specific needs, going through that design process, and collaborating with customers to provide custom solutions. Working with customers and understanding their needs, the company helps guide them to find the right equipment solution.

"We are all driving toward the same common goal of partnering with customers, and are in it for the long haul to make sure they are successful," says Dixon. "It's a culture and a mentality—and we've heard this from our customer base—that sets us up for future repeat business. 40 percent of our business in a given year is repeat business from existing customers."

Committed to remaining a press industry leader, Beckwood is proud of its products, people, and services, says Dixon. "If you have a triangle, and on the triangle you have innovation, service, and price, you have to be great at one of them. We really want to dominate the service aspect, the customer experience. We want to be good at innovation and pricing, but we really want to dominate the service aspect. From our strategic planning, that's what we are really shaping our company around." ■

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