



JAY VLAHAS RETIRES AFTER 43 YEARS



December 16, 2020 is the last day Theodore (Jay) Vlahas will be at work before officially retiring from Greenville Tool & Die Company after 43 years of service. Jay was raised in Belding by his parents Theodore and Julia Vlahas who ensured he was never a stranger to hard work. His grandparents: Chris, a Greek immigrant who started with a sandwich stand in New York, and Mary Vlahas, owned the C&M Restaurant in Belding. Later, Jay's father would assume ownership. While just a young boy, Jay's parents tasked him with washing dishes and dicing french fries. He was a shy kid, but Jay picked up some social skills working the counter at the restaurant, and then taking on a paper route. By High School Jay was working with his father in the construction and installation business. On weekends and during the summers Jay recalls hard work building/installing bleachers, cabinets, and auditorium seats. Since he showed no fear, his Dad sent him to do the climbing in the trellis beams installing basketball backboards. Jay graduated from Belding High School where he enjoyed shop and science class. He excelled in auto repair and auto body finishing. After working a couple years as a machinist in an auto parts business, and persuasion from his fiancé's uncle, Greenville Tool & Die retiree Ted Cowles, persuaded Jay to apply for employment with GTD. Jay was hired at GTD on August 8, 1977. Four months later he would marry his wife Denise. Congratulations to the two of them as they recently celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary on December 2nd. Jay completed his related instruction at Montcalm Community College and received his tool and die maker certificate in 1981. Jay and Denise have three daughters; Kim, Karen, and Krista, and four grandchildren; Jordon, Taylor, Alyssa, and Kendall. In his spare time, Jay enjoys working on vehicles, he estimates that he has rebuilt at least 20 cars/trucks from top to bottom. Over his many years of service, Jay has witnessed a lot of changes at Greenville Tool & Die. One of the things that stands out to him is how much larger the tooling GTD is capable of designing, machining, and building.

The facility, the machines, and the tooling are all much larger now. He began his career building small dies in our assembly area that only consisted of 4 small bays. Jay has been a machinist, spot welder, maintenance person, supervisor, and tool and die maker. He has also been an excellent mentor and teacher with the training of apprentices and those with less experience. Jay has painted presses and performed preventative maintenance on the CNC mills. He could be trusted to tear apart and repair any machine in the shop and be successful putting it back together again. If he does not know how to do something, he figures it out. Jay is very proud of when he was given the responsibility to manage the spot welding program to weld the assembly of 12 parts for the Ranger Pickup pillar assemblies when the Ranger re-tooled in the early 90's. He even hand qualified all parts, a huge responsibility. The prototype pillar assembly was a big success for Greenville Tool & Die, much due to the hard work and leadership that Jay displayed. Jay said his co-workers are the best and he is really going to miss them all, but it is the work he will miss the most. He really enjoys the challenges such as the more complex Class A parts. Jay said, "The job stays fresh when you always do something new." In his retirement, Jay and Denise plan to travel and adventure, spend some time on the Great Lakes in their boat, and travel throughout North America in their motor home, especially to visit their daughter in Washington State. Jay also hopes to complete more automotive restorations and home improvement projects. He is still looking forward to hard work, but now working at his own pace. Jay, all of us here at Greenville Tool & Die are fond of you, respect you, and have enjoyed working with you. We will certainly miss you. Congratulations Jay, we wish you and Denise many more happy and healthy years in your retirement and hope you come back to visit us frequently. Thank you for your many years of service and dedication to Greenville Tool & Die.



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GREENVILLE TOOL & DIE

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Greenville Tool & Die will be closed December 24th and 25th, in observance of Christmas. We will also be closed December 31st and January 1st, in observance of the New Year. Happy Holidays!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

We would like to take the opportunity to wish the following GTD employees a Happy Birthday:

December

- 12/1.....Jim Denevan
- 12/2.....Marv Doezema
- 12/2.....Tim Adkinson
- 12/6.....Joe Garnsay
- 12/8.....Chris Carr
- 12/11.....Devyn Hubbard
- 12/18.....Gordon Garvey
- 12/21.....Terry Miller
- 12/22.....Diego Torres
- 12/25.....Tristen Potter
- 12/29.....Dan Pitch
- 12/30.....Josh Bailey



CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Co-op student Ty Wood who is Heartlands Institute of Technology student of the month. Ty is a senior at Saranac High School.



Congratulations to Tool & Die Designer Chris VanOcker and his wife Kaitlin on the birth of their second child, Henry Blaize, on November 9th. Henry was 8lbs. 1oz. and joins big brother Theodore.



Congratulations to Tool & Die Maker/Designer Tony Bannen and his new wife Heidi. Best wishes for a long, blissful life together.

SUCCESSFUL HUNTS WORTH BRAGGING ABOUT



Diemaker Ken Bradley (left) took Diemaker Dave Scott (right) on a bear hunt at his cabin in Moorestown. Dave videoed the hunt and said, "It was intense." That bear came so close to Dave's shack he could have almost reached out and touched him before moving out a longer distance and giving Dave a clear shot. Dave was excited to bag the biggest bear he has taken to date and was extremely grateful to Ken for giving him the opportunity. Thank you for sharing guys.



Program Manager Brad Throop took down this moose on September 13th near Bethel, Alaska. This beautiful creature had antlers 53" wide. Thank you for sharing Brad.

 The Monthly Newsletter Of
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