

Wilson-Hurd: 100 years of making things look great

What Wausau company has been around for 100 years but keeps getting mistaken for someone else? Wilson-Hurd provides diversified services that help other companies' products look their best, but they have absolutely nothing to do with Hurd Windows.

It's a misconception the quiet company is somewhat resigned to, but after making a bit of a splash with its centennial celebration last year, it wants to set the record straight.

The company's first product was a patented bag holder designed for agricultural and industrial uses. By 1928, the company was printing and fabricating aluminum nameplates for several companies including Square D. Over the years screen printing, electronic control products, and most recently formed in-mold decorated (IMD) inserts for the automotive industry have been added to their capabilities.

"We're really diversified and we've come a long way," said Gregory Pellet, Vice President-Sales. "We've tried to stay one step ahead of any technology or product line that may be on a downward slope, and try to

come up with new things that are on the rise to assure steady and constant growth."

They now provide components to some of the biggest names in American business. If you drive a Jeep Liberty, the printed panel surrounding your heating/air conditioning controls incorporates an IMD insert produced by Wilson-Hurd. It's a fascinating process that begins with a clear sheet of plastic which is printed on the back side and then formed. This process protects the graphics from scratching or wearing off.

You'll also see Wilson-Hurd's work in point-of-purchase displays for companies like Wilson Sporting Goods, Tommy Hilfiger, Estee Lauder and Elizabeth Arden. Wilson-Hurd's decorative nameplates have been used for years by the country's biggest brewers, and their membrane switches and keypads are designed to hold up in some of the harshest industrial environments, including the petroleum drilling and exploration industry in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

"These all seem like very different applications, but what

they have in common is they require attention to detail and quality," Pellet said. "We've always been very good at making things that look very good and reflect very well on the companies using them, because throughout our company we are always inspecting things." The company constantly invests in new technologies, but credits much of its success to the quality of the central Wisconsin workforce. Although many of its customers are in distant parts of the country, the work ethic here has kept the company in Wausau for its entire 100+ years.

"I spent 21 years with a Fortune 100 company in many locations, but I've found that it's much more enjoyable to work for a smaller company like this, where you form relationships that last many years. It's really a great place to work," Pellet said. Next time you hear the name Wilson-Hurd, think about innovative decoration and control solutions for major U.S. companies—not wood windows.



A Wilson-Hurd employee solders a circuit board in a "clean room" for use on a custom electronic control product. Inset: formed and molded IMD appliques for automotive dashboards.



Company Snapshot

Wilson-Hurd ♦ 311 Winton St., Wausau ♦ 845.9221 ♦ www.wilsonhurd.com

- Founded in 1904 by George Wilson and Arthur Hurd
- Producer of decorative nameplates, point-of-purchase display components, electronic control products, and plastic in-mold decorated inserts
- President William Siebecker is third generation of Siebeckers involved in the business
- Sells to companies throughout United States
- Employs a total of 158 people between its Wausau and Berlin, WI locations
- Part owner of a company in Singapore

YPN Winterfest 2005

We invite all young professionals to Winterfest 2005, 5:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, at the Sylvan Hill Chalet, 1329 Sylvan St., Wausau. Enjoy a night of fun, with tubing open for young professionals only, activities, door prizes, networking and music. The cost is \$10 for representatives of Chamber Member companies or \$15 for non-Members. Register at www.wausauchamber.com.

The Young Professionals Network is a group of young, active and civic-minded professionals working to create a positive and exciting place to live, work and play. Young professionals represent a broad spectrum of professionals in their 20s and 30s, including teachers, lawyers, dentists, managers, nurses, artists and others. Anyone who meets this description is invited to attend, whether or not they work for a Chamber Member company.