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WEEKLY

TODAY'S NON-STOP SOURCE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

# Contractors

MARCH 17, 2017

## HOT LINE®



### INSIDE:

- AFTERMARKET OR OEM PARTS?
- REGULATORY REFORM
- INDUSTRY SHOWCASE

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**Pete Ruane, President & CEO, ARTBA**

## A New Era for Transportation Project Safety Begins



Nearly 50,000 people die or are injured in and around U.S. transportation infrastructure projects annually, according to Federal Highway Administration data. More than 125 of these fatalities are workers, while 15,000 workers are injured. In addition to the human toll, the economic costs of worker fatalities and injuries are billions of dollars annually.

In October 2016, top industry executives decided status quo safety performance was no longer enough. They launched—via the American Road & Transportation Builders Association’s (ARTBA) Foundation—the groundbreaking “Safety Certification for Transportation Project Professionals™” (SCTPP) program.

Anchored by a comprehensive website ([www.puttingsafetyfirst.org](http://www.puttingsafetyfirst.org)), the SCTPP’s program goal is to “significantly boost the hazard awareness and risk management skills of all transportation project professionals who are in positions of influence through day-to-day oversight—from project inception through completion—to cause a decline in safety incidents.”

The SCTPP program has been designed to meet the rigorous protocols required for accreditation by the American National Standards Institute and the International Organization for Standardization.

ARTBA’s Foundation also established an Online Learning Center (“Prep Courses” at [www.puttingsafetyfirst.org](http://www.puttingsafetyfirst.org)) with six initial courses to help prepare industry professionals for the exam, while simultaneously providing Professional Development Hours.

One of the most unique benefits is the program’s broad reach. While they are welcome to take the exam, it is not really aimed at safety directors. Instead, it’s targeted at thousands of project workers, supervisors, foremen, managers, designers, equipment operators, manufacturers and materials suppliers, and owners who meet the eligibility requirements. Earning the SCTPP credential shows employers and peers that individuals have the professional core competencies necessary to identify common hazards found on transportation projects and correct them—whether during planning, design or onsite personnel management—and thus prevent incidents that could result in deaths or injuries.

A select group of transportation construction professionals took the “pilot exam” late last year. In January, the ARTBA Foundation announced that 55 were part of the “inaugural class” earning the SCTPP credential.

The exam is currently open for those who meet the eligibility requirements. We encourage you to have your firm’s key employees prepare for and take the test this year. More “safety certified” professionals on transportation project sites will help enhance the health and safety for our industry’s important asset—its employees—and the motoring public.

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## 6 Aftermarket or OEM parts?

Decades of manufacturing experience and access to modern production tools have given aftermarket suppliers the capability to match exacting OEM tolerances.

## 14 Regulatory Reform

ARTBA launched a major effort to improve the federal regulatory environment timed to coincide with the incoming Trump administration.

## 38 Industry Showcase

Products, equipment and company news from around the industry.



ON THE COVER  
Cover photo courtesy of  
E2 Systems, LLC

The Portable Modular Conveyor-  
Material Placer at work placing  
concrete at the Oklahoma airport.

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# Blurring the Lines: OEM vs. Aftermarket Parts

| By Egan Hernandez

**Branded replacement parts manufacturers are increasingly “acting” like OEMs in approach to quality control, utilization of sophisticated measurement systems and adoption of lean manufacturing techniques to produce consistent, high-quality parts**

**O**ver the past 60 years, the acceptance of replacement parts suppliers for engines used in the heavy-duty construction industry has evolved significantly. Today, the quality, availability, coverage and warranty of products from branded aftermarket suppliers are increasingly rivaling those of their OEM counterparts.

This trend, largely motivated by the goal of producing consistent and high quality parts, and thus eliminating the one “knock” on aftermarket parts, is the result of the increasingly blurred line between OEM and branded aftermarket supplier.

In fact, many leading branded aftermarket suppliers are increasingly acting like OEMs, whether adopting advanced manufacturing and quality assurance programs, incorporating lean manufacturing techniques, or offering products individually as well as in kits and sets to facilitate engine overhauls.

Decades of manufacturing experience and

access to modern production tools have given sophisticated aftermarket suppliers the capability to consistently match exacting OEM tolerances. Precision quality assurance tools are used to ensure tight consistency; in some cases, gaging instruments are installed at various locations right on the product production line.

Like their OEM counterparts, aftermarket suppliers have also increased marketing and customer support services, providing excellent availability, comprehensive warranties, and even parts research capabilities. Once available only from OEMs, these services are of significant value to heavy-duty fleets, parts resellers and service shops, and are another incentive for them to source replacement parts from aftermarket suppliers.

## Expediting Equipment Repairs

Republic Diesel sources engine parts for Caterpillar, Detroit Diesel and Cummins



engines from an array of trusted aftermarket brands. The company has been serving the diesel engine market with machining services since the industry's inception.

Services typically involve disassembling engines that have been removed from heavy-duty equipment used by customers in the construction, mining and natural gas industries. In addition to typical machine shop services,





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such as resurfacing cylinder heads or welding and refinishing crankshafts, Republic Diesel also notifies customers about which engine parts should be replaced. In most cases, the customers purchase those parts from the machine shop and install them when the engine is returned.

Most of their customers in the construction market use Caterpillar equipment. When those engines require replacement parts, they normally recommend parts or kits manufactured by a replacement part specialist which covers a lot of different engine models, and has a lot of inventory stocked at distribution warehouses.

With today's challenging economy, many contractors don't carry spare parts or engines, so having machining and parts supply services are vital to them getting up and running as soon as possible.

It is also vital that service shops such as Republic Diesel retain its customers' trust and confidence. Sourcing engine parts from reliable specialty suppliers helps to meet that need, mainly because of the consistent quality and ready availability of products.

## Ensuring Quality Parts and Services

Love Machine Co., a machine shop and engine parts reseller headquartered in Salt Lake City, also has a stable of branded aftermarket suppliers. The company serves a wide variety of heavy-duty equipment applications in Utah, Idaho, and parts of Nevada.

Unplanned downtime is a killer for many of their customers in the construction market. Sometimes they'll pay staggering freight charges to get the engine faster. So, they try to give them the fastest service possible, yet with the high quality work that their shop has always been known for.

When it comes to identifying and selling replacement parts for Caterpillar engines, Love Machine's primary suppliers provide parts equivalent and interchangeable with OE parts, but they are also readily available.

It is often critical that they get needed parts to their customers quickly. By the time they are done with the machine work, they have the parts to complete the job. That makes their customers happy and enables them to be a one-stop shop.

Sometimes getting detailed engine information is difficult, even for experienced parts resellers such as Love Machine. They occasionally service Caterpillar engines that are so old



## ***Incorporating quality control processes with custom-designed gaging to ensure all features are checked precisely and efficiently is the key.***

that it is difficult to get parts information from on-line resources. It is really helpful that they can rely on their longtime aftermarket suppliers to provide that information such as parts and applications data, and failure analysis assistance such as technical bulletins and videos.

## Advancing Manufacturing Methods

Some aftermarket suppliers achieve brand name acceptance through quality that results from incorporating innovative methods on the production line.

All of this is aimed at providing end users with highly reliable products at a very competitive price.

For example, many suppliers manufacture pistons using machining operations that can result in concentricity and balance problems. To avoid such issues, a proprietary and innovative production line process improves product quality with coordinated machining operations and

specialized clamping fixtures that are fabricated in-house and updated as needed.

Incorporating quality control processes with custom-designed gaging to ensure all features are checked precisely and efficiently is the key. Gaging processes measure many critical dimensions, such as concentricity, ring grooves and weight. The accuracy of the gaging processes by finished product inspections at specified intervals in an in-house quality assurance laboratory using advanced measuring instruments is unique.

Programs exist to optimize production, reduce waste, minimize work-in-progress and labor, and provide a tremendous overall quality improvement. Some suppliers share production process improvement concepts with suppliers, helping them improve and maintain consistent quality and control costs.

This trend of branded aftermarket suppliers pushing the boundaries to ensure they have comparable product is sure to continue. ■

*Egan Hernandez is in charge of marketing and communications at Industrial Parts Depot (IPD), located in Torrance, California. Since 1955, IPD has been designing and manufacturing a variety of diesel & gas engine replacement parts for a wide range of applications. Hernandez started at the company in 2011 and has over 25 years of parts marketing experience with manufacturing companies.*



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