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AFFORDABILITY OF FH400J HELPS AMERICAN-MADE COMPANY INCREASE PRODUCTION

Out with the old and in with the new may be an adage that applies to more than a final product. When Henry Repeating Arms Company purchased a 150,000 square-foot facility previously owned by a part-time supplier, they not only added new rifle models to the now-Henry Wisconsin manufacturing lineup, but they made room for a Toyoda FH400J on their shop floor to keep up with production.

Henry Wisconsin President Anthony Imperato purchased the Rice Lake, Wisconsin-based facility from one of Henry's suppliers in 2006. The former occupant primarily manufactured storm door hardware for national big box retailers, but due to the industry's seasonality, production gaps were satiated with the manufacturing of rifle components for Henry Rifle.

"The company was more of a transition than a start-up, since we acquired the building and all of its assets," explained Andy Wickstrom, general manager of Henry Wisconsin. One of these assets was a Toyoda FA400 horizontal machining center, purchased in 1998 specifically for Henry Rifle componentry by the previous company.

With just 17 employees, Henry Wisconsin began production in January 2007. *"We got through the first year with minimal growing pains,"* recalled Wickstrom. *"And when Henry introduced a new model, we were ready to expand production to support it."*

"We bought our first horizontal machine from Toyoda at IMTS in 1998. It has been a workhorse for us and more than ten years later, it's still working great."

– Andy Wickstrom, general manager of Henry Wisconsin

In early 2009, the Henry Wisconsin team began exploring ways to increase capacity to satisfy heightened production numbers. The company's FA400 was already running around the clock, six days a week to fulfill orders for Henry's core products. *"It has been a workhorse for us and more than ten years later, it's still working great,"* Wickstrom said of the FA400. But, the production demands for the 17 American-made models outside of Henry's award-winning Golden Boy and Henry Lever Action required the addition of a new machine to the shop floor. To meet that demand, the company purchased a second Toyoda horizontal machining center.

Henry needed an affordable, compact machining center that could cut with superior accuracy and craftsmanship. *"Toyoda eliminated all of the unnecessary options from the FH400J so it was affordable,"* said Wickstrom of Henry's purchase. *"It turned out to be the perfect solution for us."*

"The new machine is 19 percent faster than our old one in terms of cycle time," Wickstrom said of the FH400J's rapid traverse speed, 15,000 RPM spindle, and 2.5 second chip-to-chip tool change time. *"This means we can fulfill higher production volumes as needed."*

Henry Wisconsin has experienced steady growth with the addition of new Henry rifle models and component work, plus expansion into custom die casting, painting, and machining for other industries. Today, about 80 percent of the company's production is focused on supplying work to Henry Rifle, while custom manufacturing makes up the other 20 percent of business.