

Southern Prestige in Statesville Gives New Meaning to Precision

Aerospace certification equals more business

White tents, folding chairs and rounds with tablecloths marked that a celebration was afoot at Southern Prestige in Statesville. They were celebrating their AS9100:2004 certification with guests from the **North Carolina State University Industrial Extension Service (IES)**.



The company that began making cartons in 1979 is now one of 45 certified AS9100 companies in North Carolina, according to the International Aerospace Quality Group OASIS database.

Cookie Wilson, Vice President of Southern Prestige welcomed the guests including Statesville Mayor Costi Kutteh and Statesville Chamber Chairman David Bradley, as well as Iredell county commissioners and plant employees. She apologized that her husband and Southern Prestige President, James Wilson, was not by her side, as he was signing the bonus checks for all 85 employees. The bonus was a ‘thank you’ for helping to achieve the certification in six months time.

“Growth is the reason for this certification,” said James Wilson once he joined the festivities. “AS9100 opens up doors for us that we haven’t explored before. Our quality is superior and our systems are in place. Now we can back it up. My goal is that after I retire, you will all still be here.”

Precision Processing Systems, a division of Southern Prestige Industries, is a computer numerical control (CNC) machining manufacturer. They provide CNC turning, CNC milling, and CNC screw machine capabilities to the aerospace, textile, electronic, medical, automotive and scientific industries. Machined components such as those found in fire suppression systems have up to 256 active dimensions with precision to a millionth of an inch.

Aerospace makes up 65 percent of the company’s business. The AS9100 standard was created specifically for the aerospace industry and incorporates all the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 quality management standard. It includes aerospace-specific requirements such as safety and reliability components.

With the expected increase in aerospace business, Wilson expects to grow his staff to 100 employees within two years. “This certification will help us do what we need to grow,”

he said. Bracing for this growth, Wilson recently bought the building behind the current facility.

At the close of the ceremony, Wilson again thanked his employees and partners, including Barbara Williams, extension specialist with the NC State University IES. “Barbara’s a champion,” he said. “I can’t tell you how invaluable she was to us.” IES provided pre-assessment training and certification preparation.