

EDM TODAY



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AMERICA'S EDM FORUM

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By EDM'ers for EDM'ers



XACT WIRE EDM CELEBRATES DUAL 40TH AND 30TH ANNIVERSARIES

In 1984, Jeff Gubbins, along with a partner at the time, had a vision. They believed investing in the best technology, hiring and training the best people, and listening to their customers' needs would be a formula for success. Jeff knew that with five years of Wire EDM experience, he had the machining skills to do the work at a high level. With his Mechanical Engineering Bachelor of Science degree and his current pursuit of an MBA from Marquette University, he also had confidence in his technical and business skills.



*XACT Wire EDM Headquarters
Waukesha, Wisconsin*

XACT started with one Japax LU3B "Bridgeport Style" Wire EDM in a small rented 1,000 sq ft shop in Waukesha, Wisconsin. In 1986, a new Charmilles Robofil 400 and advanced CAD/CAM station were purchased that could do 4-axis UV work. At the time, this was expensive, innovative technology. Early on, Jeff focused on seeking production work, but most applications involved tooling back then. He found that the tool-making industry (stamping dies and molds) was eager to find a company to meet its needs. They demanded on-time delivery and high-precision work. Jeff met and exceeded their expectations and was rewarded with more work. More importantly, the word spread of this small company doing outstanding work. XACT also did a variety of marketing from the very beginning. This set XACT Wire on a path that allowed it to grow into the company that it is today. XACT Wire currently has an arsenal of 46 Wire EDMs and 9 high-speed Small-Hole EDMs, zero mills, lathes, and grinders!



Jeff Gubbins,
Founder and President

EDM Today sat down with Jeff to discuss the secret to XACT Wire's success and growth. Jeff shared that it is a combination of many things. Certainly, choosing the right employees is critical. But that's only part of what makes XACT Wire EDM successful. Jeff added that it is also the investment in the latest technology that allows XACT Wire EDM to be unsurpassed in terms of quality and precision. It also means that they can meet the production needs of their customers. Since its early beginnings in 1984, XACT Wire has continuously added new Wire EDM and advanced inspection equipment. Jeff believes that precise inspection is critical to ensuring high-quality processes. Jeff shared that while other companies typically add other types of metalworking machines, XACT has stayed uniquely focused on EDM for 40 years, resulting in an extremely high level of expertise.

This year marks a dual anniversary for XACT Wire EDM. The Waukesha headquarters is celebrating its 40th anniversary, and the Cary, Illinois, facility is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

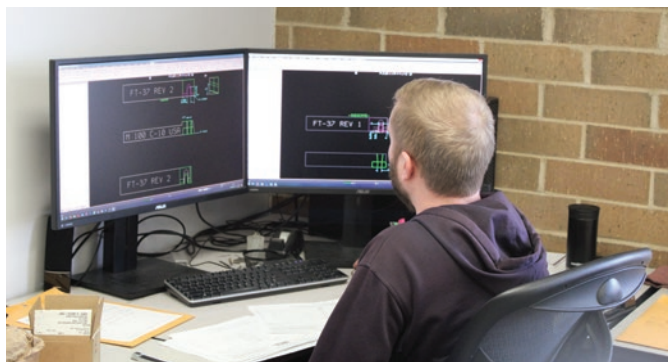
Jason Mueller is the Division Manager responsible for the Cary facility's day-to-day operations. EDM Today visited with Jason to learn about the operations of this Illinois facility.

Jason has been with XACT Wire since 1990. The facility has grown steadily since its opening. Today, it is almost 9,000 sq ft, with twelve CNC Wire EDM machines, five EDM drills, laser marking, inspection, and miscellaneous support equipment. Things are a little tight, but it likely won't be long before they expand again.

Jason remembers the time many years ago when they ran a single shift. However, much like their Waukesha headquarters, it did not take long for their Illinois customers to recognize the quality of their work and the timeliness of their deliveries. They soon had more work than they could handle with a single shift. Adding a second shift helped, but their workload kept increasing. Today, they run three shifts and have been adding equipment as needed.



Jason Mueller – Division Manager
XACT Wire EDM Cary, Illinois Facility



Cary, Illinois Programmer at a CAD Station

The Cary facility also has a complete programming and project management department and is operationally autonomous from the headquarters in Waukesha. The two facilities do help each other out when the workload requires it, and both are ISO 9001:2015 certified. Jason explained that the two XACT Wire EDM facilities have Jeff as a common owner and share a philosophy of treating employees well and providing the best possible customer service.

The Cary facility was opened in 1994 to serve the local needs of the many customers in the Chicago area who were geographically closer than Waukesha.

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XACT Wire EDM Sample Parts

It has grown, like XACT in Wisconsin has, to service customers nationally. To provide the best service, each facility has its own group of customers. When asked about their work type, Jason indicated they work for many different and diverse industries. Their sweet spot tends to be work that must be shipped on time and generally requires high precision. It is ideal when work arrives ready to load into the Wire EDM with no additional machining processes required. If additional work is needed, it is by no means a deal breaker, but each situation is considered on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the required additional work, they may do it in-house with high-speed Small-Hole EDM or send it to one of their outsourcing partners.

When discussing the shared philosophy of the Waukesha and Cary facilities, Jason further stated that one of their shared beliefs is choosing employees based on their character and willingness to work as part of a team. It is nice when they find someone with the right character who also has experience in Wire EDM, but experience is a far secondary consideration.

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In many ways, the dual anniversary celebrates the family that XACT Wire EDM has become. Jeff and Jason recognize their employees' contributions to foster growth and make the company successful. Jason provided an excellent example of their company working as a team. During the depths of the COVID pandemic, before there was a vaccine, it was a challenging time with much uncertainty. Unlike other companies that could allow employees to work from home, a Wire EDM shop has no such luxury. The employees came to work, adopted the necessary protections, and pulled together to continue to meet the needs of their customers. Jason said proudly that, in many ways, the COVID experience has brought the employees closer, and the company emerged stronger than ever.



*XACT Wire EDM Booth
Design-to-Part Show, Schaumburg, Illinois*

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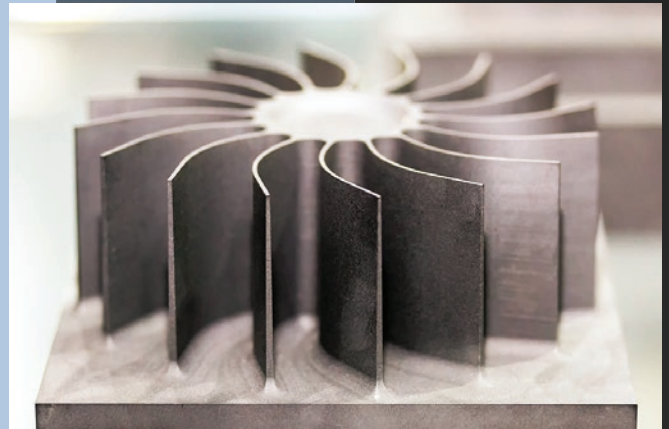


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Their website shows an incredibly diverse group of parts. In some cases, you may wonder how they could have been made. During the discussion with Jeff Gubbins, the question of diverse industries came up. Jeff expressed that he believes seeking customers from diverse industries is one of the key elements of a strategic plan for growth. In Jeff's case, it was a result of his salespeople intentionally targeting different industries in a variety of ways; trade shows, directories, direct mail, magazine advertising, emails, sales calls, etc. But part of it happened organically, of course, as XACT Wire EDM's reputation grew by word of mouth.

From EDM Today's perspective, credit must also be given to XACT Wire EDM's sales team. They do not sit and wait for the phone to ring. They are proactively meeting new prospective customers and working to keep the company on a growth path. EDM Today recently ran into the XACT Wire sales team at a trade show in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Visiting both the Waukesha, Wisconsin, and Cary, Illinois facilities is very motivational. Seeing the teamwork and camaraderie between the employees and management is a testament to what is possible with the right people and the right management strategy.

EDM Today hopes everyone in our industry will join us in congratulating XACT Wire EDM for achieving success and growth on their 40th and 30th anniversaries.

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