Day 7:BD

Becton Dickinson - manufacturing hypodermic needles, plastic and glass syringes, pre-filled syringes and safety-engineered devices

Day six brought me to Becton Dickinson. Davey came with me today as well. The BD tool room supervisor, Ron Zach gave Davey and I a briefing on all the educational benefits that BD has to offer and gave examples of current machinists who have gone through the Central Community College route. He then introduced us to approximately seven machinists. We then did some stretching exercises and were released to Steve Sliva. Steve showed us how blueprints come into the department and how machinists take the prints to their machines according to the needs of the company. He gave me great resources for to ordering metals and tooling for all the precision machines at BD. We took a tour with Steve and he showed us how the materials and tooling were stored. The inventory they have there is unbelievable. When something breaks down it becomes the #1 priority for that machine to be fixed. The second priority was to get jobs done for new projects that research and development wants. They have three shifts at BD in the machine tool area because if something breaks down in any of the shifts they have someone there to make the part that failed because of some reason or another.

We were then handed off to Mark Shemek who showed us how to grab a project from Steve's box, get the material, read the blueprint and then he input the information in conversational language to run print specifications on a piece of aluminum. What was really interesting was how all the CNC Milltronics (which we have a similar one at CHS) had four vises on them in which they could do multiple subprograming on. Mark is very good at what he does. He was punching in numbers in that machine faster than I could read them off of the blueprint. One of the things he stressed was that when somebody came in from a department and they had an urgent need and a, "We need this now!" message; somebody in Mark's department would have to stop what they were doing break everything down on a setup on a machine to make the part that was top priority. That's the art of being a top-quality machinist like Mark and his crew are. Every company in Columbus is looking for workers like this.

Before long it was close to noon and Davey and I had options. We could eat lunch provided by Hy-Vee or go to town. We decided to eat the meal provided by Hy-Vee. We had 30 minutes and we talked with Mark about fast eaters and having the one break of the day, which was 30 minutes so you better enjoy it. I met a lot of former CHS students during lunch and during the tours. About 1:30 we were handed off to David Hillan. He showed us one of 40 grinding tables that get rebuilt every 9-12 months. Each table was very expensive. He then continued to take Davey and I through the whole plant where we saw everything that was making needles and syringes. David did a great job of showing us various operations of each process from welding approximately ¼" needles paired down to approximately .005, the size of a hair with a hole in it! I will never forget the look in Davey's eyes when I told him there was a hole in that piece of metal.

The three of us gowned up with hairnets, shoe covers and jackets, then toured BD. Everything needed to be sterile. From that point on nothing being made was touched by a human hand. David took us upstairs where one lady was moving totes of syringes. She had already put 15 miles on that day just moving totes. We then called it a day. I'll be heading to the mold repair room tomorrow.

Pictured: Mark, Davey and Tracy Dodson

Pictured: David, Davey and Tracy Dodson