

# New Outsourced Services

*It really had to hit the ground running.*

by Jane Alexander

**Y**ou can count on Mother Nature for a lot of things—good, bad and otherwise.

Take the case of IDEX. The company had been quietly rolling out its Positive PumpCare™ network of certified pump repair and maintenance centers last summer, when Mother Nature elected to put the program to a nightmarish test.

When the worst storm in over a century swept through southern Ohio just after midnight on July 18th, production at the General Mills Cereal Plant in Sharonville ground to a halt. More than 10 inches of rain fell in a three-hour period, causing widespread power outages, closing roads and forcing area businesses to deal with extensive damage to facilities and equipment.

For Clinton Hart, General Mills' Plant Maintenance Manager, the deluge resulted in the kind of pump equipment failure that simply cannot be planned for, nor prevented. The storm left him with 35 pieces of equipment that were disabled and inoperable. Suddenly, Hart was faced with the overwhelming challenge of getting these pumps, blowers and related equipment rebuilt, repaired, tested and back on line. And he only had a few days to do it.

Luckily for General Mills, in the months prior to the Ohio flood, IDEX had been working on the development of a global network of certified pump repair and maintenance facilities.

IDEX representatives, following the company's Six Sigma strategy, had been visiting with distributors and end users alike to discuss their problems and their concerns in servicing and maintaining positive displacement pumps—those used to move difficult, high-maintenance materials such as adhesives, asphalt, paint, powders and food products.

During these visits, a consensus emerged.

First, it was found that the maintenance supervisors had responsibilities reaching beyond the scope of pump maintenance. They were actually carrying out the work of hands-on engineers and departmental managers with budget responsibilities. Not surprisingly, these managers

expressed significant interest in the proposed program. However, they asked that it be delivered in a service package that was global in reach, providing consistent, "best practice" services to each of their plants, which might be scattered across the U.S., or even in foreign countries.



Photo Courtesy of The Cincinnati Enquirer

## Six Sigma Strategizing – It's Critical to Quality

Using Six Sigma principles, a supplier:

- knows its customers
- understands their issues
- respects their values

As a Six Sigma Supplier, IDEX's focus on its customers' needs is directing the organization to the type of improvements that are most beneficial to those customers. The establishment of the Positive PumpCare™ Program is one such improvement.

# Program Proves its Worth

Moreover, they wanted the service to be provided by a local source that would:

- know them and their operation;
- be available around the clock;
- maintain a large inventory of products; and
- offer factory-authorized expertise.

If IDEX could provide all that *and* prove how such a program would help reduce costs of pump ownership, the managers said they would be happy to consider the idea.

That was all IDEX needed to hear. Jerry Owen, Director of Distributor Relations/Service, backed by the corporation and its six Pump Group companies (Viking, Warren Rupp, Pulsafeeder, Micropump, Corken

and Versa-Matic), sprang into action. He and his staff selected key distributors and developed a rigorous training and certification process that led to establishment of the Positive PumpCare™ Certified Service Centers program. It's a network of local distributors that share best-practice services and provide their customers with on-demand repairs, retrofits, upgrades and replacement parts.

*So how did  
Mother Nature figure  
into all this?*

On the morning after the Ohio storm, Clinton Hart contacted the R.A. Mueller Company of Cincinnati. Mueller had just been designated as one of the first Positive PumpCare™ Certified Service Centers in the nation. Although many roads in the area were flooded and virtually impassable, Mueller's service and repair technicians managed to make their way to the General Mills site in short order. They soon began removing pumps and planning the work

necessary to bring the system back on line. To meet their customer's deadline, they worked overtime and through the weekend. Late Wednesday afternoon, July 25th, the final pumps were delivered and installed, meeting Hart's recovery schedule. The next day, Mueller's technicians laser aligned the pumps and blowers. On Saturday, the 28th, they participated in the start-up.

Ohio's "storm of the century" was a harrowing ordeal for everyone involved. This disaster, however, also served as a real-life proving ground for the Positive PumpCare™ program.

That's why Clinton Hart is smiling. When General Mills needed a qualified pump service team, Hart found that he could count on R.A. Mueller and Positive PumpCare™ to meet the challenge—quickly and successfully.

*Take that,  
Mother Nature!*

According to Hart, the equipment that Mueller serviced came back on line flawlessly, "no leaks and no surprises."

**For more information on the Positive PumpCare™ Program, log onto [www.idexpositivepumpcare.com](http://www.idexpositivepumpcare.com)**

