

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Christie Carmigiano
Precision Metalforming Association
216-901-8800
ccarmigiano@pma.org

E.J. Ajax & Sons, Inc. Wins 2010 North American Safety Award of Honor

CLEVELAND, OH August 27, 2010 E.J. Ajax & Sons, Inc., Fridley, MN, has received the 2010 North American Metal Forming Industry Award of Honor for Safety as part of the Precision Metalforming Association's (PMA's) Awards of Excellence in Metalforming. The company's safety program has yielded outstanding results as E.J. Ajax has gone more than 20 years without a lost-time incident and more than seven years without an OSHA-recordable incident.

At E.J. Ajax, personal safety is valued above everything else. Every new hire is provided with safety gear that includes safety glasses (prescription if necessary), a \$200 pair of work boots with full metatarsal protection and ear protection. Workers who handle sharp metal pieces also wear elbow-length Kevlar gauntlets. All safety equipment is replaced at company expense when needed—no questions asked.

The safety culture is strictly enforced: one violation within a 12-month period warrants a verbal warning, the second is put in writing, and the third results in a one-day paid decision-making leave, when the employee is sent home to decide whether he/she can follow safety policies. If not, termination results.

The enforcement of safety policies includes random drug testing for all company employees, including office employees and officers.

Employees are encouraged to participate in the safety process. Safety training is continuous with a minimum of 10 hours per employee annually. Over the last 10 years, workers have documented an average of 200 process improvement suggestions per year; one-third have been safety-related, and the majority of those suggestions have been implemented. Workers also have total authority to shut down any machine or operation at any time if they question its safety.

The company's safety program has many unique elements, including a wellness program with ergonomics professionals making site visits twice per year as well as every time the company defines a new manufacturing job. An incentive program rewards employee safety with annual bonuses equal to half of the company's savings from low workers' compensation rates.

E.J. Ajax was one of the first companies in Minnesota to tie its apprenticeship training to the NIMS Level I Metalforming Skills credential. Industrial safety and environmental protection is one of six sets of occupational duties that comprise NIMS Level I. All of the company's employees have earned this credential, which requires a physical demonstration and written examination of safety knowledge. E.J. Ajax also has a strong partnership with Minnesota OSHA, as it was the first metal stamping company in the state to achieve OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) designation.

As a result of E.J. Ajax's successes, the company has received numerous awards, including the Minnesota Safety Council Governor's Award of Honor for plant safety for 16 consecutive years. It also was named one of the Top Ten Safest Companies in America in 2007.

More than 50 Metal Forming Companies from as far away as Puerto Rico and Canada have toured E.J. Ajax since 2000 to learn about their safety culture first hand.

The Safety Award is one of eight Awards of Excellence in Metalforming presented annually by PMA. Sponsored by Pitcher Insurance Agency, Chicago, IL, the award acknowledges either an effective comprehensive safety program or a specific innovative idea in the context of an effective safety program. Along with recognition in industry publications and at events, E.J. Ajax & Sons will receive a \$1,500 cash prize that will be donated to the Hennepin Technical College Foundation Scholarship Fund.

PMA is the full-service trade association representing the \$113-billion metal-forming industry of North America—the industry that creates precision metal products using stamping, fabricating, spinning, slide forming and roll forming technologies, and other value-added processes. Its nearly 1,000 member companies also include suppliers of equipment, materials and services to the industry. PMA leads innovative member companies toward superior competitiveness and profitability through advocacy, networking, statistics, the PMA Educational Foundation, FABTECH and METALFORM tradeshow, and *MetalForming* magazine.

Editor's Note: Information on PMA's Awards of Excellence in Metalforming is available at www.pma.org.