

Hercules Machine Tool & Die Expansion Powered by Electrex Industrial Solutions 58 Years & Counting

The key to expansion for Hercules Machine Tool & Die over the last five decades has included an important fifty-eight year partnership with Electrex Industrial Solutions as their go-to industrial electrical contractor. Their partnership began in 1957, with Electrex founder Larry Page Sr. wiring buildings for an early Hercules expansion. The relationship has continued through Electrex's second-generation leadership and Electrex's own expansion into automation and controls for stamping presses through its Rexcon division.

At the Hercules plant in Warren, MI, Rexcon wired and installed controls on a 4,000 ton Danly straight side stamping press with hydraulic cushions and four 1,000 ton underdrive presses. They are currently undertaking a massive upgrade of thirty tryout presses at Hercules and their sister company, Positive Industries. This project includes upgrading the wiring and controls to equip the tryout presses for production press capability - designed to meet increased demand for third-party production stamping requests from the auto industry.



Bob Crane, Senior Engineer at Hercules Machine Tool & Die, and Larry Page, Owner of Electrex Industrial Solutions.

Harrison Township, MI | July 2015 – As the automotive industry emerges from this recession leaner and stronger, they've made a few sacrifices along the way. This has included a reduction in automaker-run stamping production plants. While shuttering plants may seem like bad news for workers, it has meant big opportunity for many seasoned stamping operations and tool and die professionals.

"With fewer production facilities, any little hiccup - even a single broken die - can mean a whole line goes down," explained Bob Crane, Senior Engineer at Hercules Machine Tool & Die. "Auto plants obviously can't afford that, and they've been calling on expert tool and die companies like ours to fill in any stamping production gaps."

Hercules is a long-time tool and die supplier founded in 1951, and has continuously expanded over the last sixty-four years to meet new challenges in the changing auto industry. With automakers' increased demand for outside production stamping, Hercules has once again found themselves expanding and changing their operations.

While expansion can be daunting, Hercules counts on their fifty-eight year relationship with Electrex Industrial Solutions to make expansion as easy and simple as possible.

Founded in 1957 by Larry Page Sr., Electrex's very first industrial customer was Hercules Machine Tool & Die. That first job involved wiring new buildings and presses during an early expansion at the Hercules plant in Warren, Michigan.

"I remember the first time I met him, he was shimmying up an 'I' beam to get to some electrical wiring in the ceiling," said the eighty-three year old Crane, who has worked with Electrex through both generations of leadership. "A lot has changed since then, but they've remained our go-to people for installing new equipment, keeping our old presses running, powering any new construction, and pretty much any electrical need we have."

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Since 1993, Electrex has been under the helm of the second Larry Page. Their partnership with Hercules has grown alongside both companies' expansions. Over the last five decades, they've powered and wired all Hercules buildings, as well as maintained and upgraded the complex electrical work of their stamping presses. In fact, it was this additional specialization in industrial press automation and controls that led to the formation of Rexcon, a division of Electrex, in 1988.



Hercules' 4,000 ton Danly straight side stamping press with hydraulic cushions and a bed size of 204" x 108"

"Anybody can wire up a building or put in a light switch, but press equipment is unique and requires a very different kind of expertise," explained Crane. So, when Hercules needed to install and re-wire a 4,000-ton Danly straight side press with hydraulic cushions, they called on Electrex, and Rexcon, to get the job done. The specific combination of industrial electrical expertise with specialized capabilities in press automation, wiring, and controls is what makes the Electrex/Rexcon partnership with Hercules so powerful. As time goes on, Electrex is approaching the 3rd generation to work with Hercules as Larry Page's sons, Larry Page III and Chris Page, become more involved in the operation of the company.

"We've had a great relationship for fifty-eight years, from the first job Larry Page Sr. did for us wiring transformers and getting power to presses in 1957 - through today - and all the specialized electrical work for our presses and stamping operations," Crane continued. "A lot of these presses are old, antiques even. Rexcon's people can take old press equipment, re-wire it, and get the controls up to modern standards so they can be used for another fifty years."

After the 4,000-ton Danly job was completed, Electrex's Rexcon division began a massive upgrade of eighteen tryout presses at Hercules' Warren plant, as well as twelve more over at Hercules' sister company, Positive Industries.

Rexcon's automation and controls experts are now bringing the tryout presses up to production press standards and capability, including all OSHA requirements. Each hybrid tryout/production press will be re-wired and outfitted with new controls and the RexTouch™ Palm Button, allowing Hercules to use all thirty presses for full production stamping, when required.

According to Hercules's Senior Engineer, the demand for production stamping has been so great over the last few years, the company can pick and choose which jobs they take. While overall this is certainly a good thing, it also means they've had to turn down some jobs due to lack of capacity.

The stamping presses that will get new automation and controls range from 800 to 1,600 ton, across two locations. While none come close to the 4,000-ton behemoth, when the tryout press upgrade is complete it will increase the production stamping capabilities of Hercules and Positive Industries.

Beneath the cold, hard exterior of American factories, the real power always comes from people. It's fifty-eight years and counting, and it's unsung relationships like this one - between Hercules Machine Tool & Die and Electrex Industrial Solutions - that keep America's economy and manufacturing industry alive and expanding.

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About Electrex Industrial

Founded in 1957, Electrex Industrial Solutions is full service industrial electrical contractor approaching its third generation of family ownership. Electrex's full professional capabilities include power distribution, high voltage service, electrical service for new construction, back-up emergency generators, and un-interruptible power supply systems, along with the design of industrial electrical services. Established in 1988, Rexcon Controls & Automation, a subdivision of Electrex Industrial Solutions, is an industry leader in industrial automation controls. For more information about Electrex and Rexcon services, please visit electrexindustrial.com/.

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