

THE

INNOVATOR



Quarterly Publication

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**UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA'S
RAGIN' CAJUNS**

**BEGNEAUD
BUILDS
ENCLOSURES**

**CAD LEADS
WITH
SOLID EDGE**

BEGNEAUD adds new dimensions to UL Lafayette logo

BEGNEAUD Manufacturing, Inc. recently teamed up with Gerald Hebert, Athletic Development Coordinator for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, in an effort to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the UL Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns athletic complex. Hebert knew he wanted striking new signs for the entranceways to all the athletic facilities. However, he was not certain how to best create the signs he envisioned, and his budget was very limited.

Hebert asked members of the university administration if anyone knew who could make the kind of signs he was looking for, and BEGNEAUD was the common answer. Hebert says: "I knew my next door neighbor was a Begneaud, so I spoke with her too. As it turned out she is Don Begneaud's sister, and she confirmed that BEGNEAUD was the company to talk to. Upon my initial visit they were unsure how they would create this type of sign. If BEGNEAUD couldn't have built this, then I wouldn't have done anything."

Don Begneaud, CEO and Owner of BEGNEAUD, says "Throughout the years as the company has grown, we've been approached by a number of non-profit organizations seeking financial sponsorship. Rather than just saying yes or no, we established criteria for in-kind donations versus monetary contributions. Once we established that this project fit our criteria for in-kind donations, we assembled a team to determine how to produce the signs. My involvement with this project was as an advisor to the group."

Hebert came to BEGNEAUD with only a poster of the UL Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns logo. "When I first saw the logo, I wondered how we were going to be able to replicate it in metal," says Myra Robin, BEGNEAUD CAD Department Supervisor. "At Don's suggestion, we laser cut the entire logo from a flat piece of .063-inch thick aluminum as a starting point for brainstorming."

Dawn Comeaux, Executive Assistant to Don Begneaud, adds: "We were able to remove parts from the prototype, which provided us with a visual of the design. It also allowed us to address our assembly technique concerns. We elected to use fasteners wherever possible; however, since we were anodizing the colors, some of the parts had to be glued so the fasteners wouldn't show through."

"The most difficult aspect of the job from a design standpoint was separating each of the layers in AutoCAD," Myra says. "Although Gerald supplied us with a flat drawing of the logo, we still had to copy and paste each of the layers to achieve the desired result for laser cutting purposes. Some of the segments were small intricate parts, which made this task tedious."



▲ Pictured above with one of the UL Lafayette signs (left to right): Dawn Comeaux, Executive Assistant to Don Begneaud; Mark Faul, Vice President and Production Manager; Brent Reinhardt, Laser Department Supervisor; and Myra Robin, CAD Department Supervisor. The watermark image features one of the actual signs installed at Cajun Field.

Brent Reinhardt, BEGNEAUD Laser Department Supervisor, comments: "The programming was a big challenge because I had to figure out how to do things we've never done before. Typically we start our pierce (the point where the laser beam initiates its cut) on the outer contour of the part. This job required that our pierce begin on the actual contour. Although it was a challenge, the end result was excellent."

"I knew the final product would be nice, but I didn't realize it would be this nice," says BEGNEAUD Vice President and Production Manager Mark Faul.

Hebert adds: "We are trying to send the message to the community and to our players that UL Lafayette's athletic department is interested in a classy and professional look. These signs deliver that message." ■

Innovation Awards recognize creative solutions

In the late '80s Don Begneaud viewed a Tom Peters video where a plant manager noticed an employee going back and forth from the employee's workstation to the kitchen. Thinking the employee was goofing off, the manager went into the kitchen to see exactly what the employee was doing. The employee opened the freezer and retrieved several metal parts. Thinking this to be peculiar, the manager stopped the employee and asked the employee what he was doing. The employee explained that he had to insert a metal sleeve into a mating part, but the tolerance was so tight it was very difficult to accomplish. The employee said he thought if he placed the sleeve in the freezer, it would shrink enough to insert into its mating part. The manager was so impressed with the employee's out of the box thinking to solve a problem that he gave him a cash bonus.

This story inspired Don to inaugurate the BEGNEAUD Innovation Award. This award recognizes employees who show inventiveness

and creative thinking on the job. Employees who create a process, or procedure, or a solution that increases quality or productivity, reduces cost, or enhances safety are nominated by their peers to receive an Innovation Award. A BEGNEAUD management panel reviews the nominations, and employees whose work meets the award criteria receive a bonus and are commended in our internal newsletter, THE TRAINOVATOR.

Past Innovation Award recipients have come up with ideas for our BEGNEAUD hinge clip design, punch tool optimization and, more recently, an anti-whip clamp on the TUBEMATIC. In keeping with the BEGNEAUD philosophy of sharing technical information, Innovation Award recipients will write articles detailing their innovations in future issues of *The Innovator*. ■

Try Try Try a New Angle



"Organizational charts may show a business hierarchy. However, all of us at BEGNEAUD, no matter our position, believe hands-on involvement is a necessity in furthering our success."



In this issue of *The Innovator* I want to have fun with the word "try-angle," otherwise known as triangle. Throughout the history of BEGNEAUD, and my life for that matter, I have lived by a simple philosophy, what I call the "try-angle." When a solution works, apply it. When it doesn't work – try a new approach. This ideology has been repeatedly revealed to anyone who's read *The Innovator* during its first three years. This principle is also constantly communicated to our customers as we continually strive to increase the value of their product(s). The "try-angle" is also part of our company-wide approach to cross training.



the three-legged stand provides. I believe this stability is comparable to the stability of BEGNEAUD. Our success has derived from our ability to think outside the box.

Take our training methods for example. Each employee at BEGNEAUD is given the opportunity to cross train in different areas. We first tried an academic approach to in-house training, but quickly learned that the technology and approaches we employ cannot be taught

in a classroom. So we had to develop an alternative method. Now we encourage hands-on learning on the shop floor, which offers greater retention than the traditional classroom approach to teaching these skills. The importance of wearing different hats is a value-added benefit to each of our personal portfolios.

The geometrical figure itself has been a fascination of mine since childhood, probably in part because my uncle Donald, my namesake, tragically disappeared in the



Cross training also fosters respect and appreciation among co-workers while spurring creativity, collaboration and increased competencies. We feel that's just another example of our motto: *Innovation Through Common Sense*.



While we're on that subject, I'd also like to let you know that the next edition of *The Innovator* will offer a peek inside our new Technology Center and a look at the advantages of further automating our already automated processes. Please stay tuned for that, and more on our ongoing use of the "try-angle."

Bermuda Triangle. What happened to him is still a mystery. Also, my fingerprint, which forms the basis of the BEGNEAUD logo, has a triangular shape at its center. The outer perimeter of our logo is a square. These two forms combine to create the angles of the great pyramids of Egypt. Their profile is typically triangular from an elevation land view, whereas a view from the air reveals a square outline.

It's no coincidence that this fascination has found its way into many BEGNEAUD designs. If you've ever used a tripod on uneven terrain, you're aware of the steadiness

Donald M. Begneaud

Donald M. Begneaud
CEO/Owner, BEGNEAUD

Dispelling the rumor, exposing the truth: BEGNEAUD BUILDS ENCLOSURES

Webster's defines a rumor as: 1) a piece of unverified information of uncertain origin usually spread by word of mouth; and 2) unverified information received from another, hearsay. Jim Ousse and Scott Thibodeaux, BEGNEAUD outside sales representatives, occasionally encounter the rumor that BEGNEAUD has lost interest in building enclosures for the oil and gas industry. This could not be farther from the truth: In fact, BEGNEAUD builds more enclosures today than at any other time in its history.

BEGNEAUD CEO, Don Begneaud and President, Paul Sewall, have speculated that the origin of this rumor might stem from the fact that in the past BEGNEAUD has declined opportunities to quote on the very large enclosures associated with the international oil and gas industry. The reason for foregoing these opportunities was based on our plant infrastructure, namely our lack of



space and handling capacity, as opposed to a lack of interest on the part of BEGNEAUD. The good news is that BEGNEAUD has since addressed those infrastructure issues and is now ready, willing and able to accommodate the fabrication of large enclosures.

Another too-common marketplace perception is that the BEGNEAUD level of quality, which generally exceeds our customers expectations, is too expensive. Although BEGNEAUD feels strongly about the added value our customers receive for their money in terms of quality, consistency, and image, we acknowledge that our focus, at least in part, needs to be on providing each customer with the level of quality they desire at a competitive cost.

Our greatest challenge lies in helping our customers understand the various ways in which our precision manufacturing processes allow them to offset our slightly higher prices by lowering their own internal costs. For example, when a standard enclosure is purchased off the shelf, the customer's employees often have to knock out holes, install windows and attach bracketry. In contrast to that sort of labor intensive, time-consuming, and relatively risky work, BEGNEAUD produces a custom-built enclosure to the customer's exact specifications. Furthermore, the repeatability of our precision processes ensure that whether we produce four, 40 or 400 of a certain enclosure design they will be identical to

within thousandths of an inch. This level of consistency can be leveraged by our customers, especially those challenged by the rigors of pneumatic and hydraulic applications, enabling them to streamline assembly work, thereby reducing costs. Internal cost reductions, namely those associated with skilled labor, often offset the "higher price" by a 2- or even 3-to-1 margin.

However, we recognize that many enclosure applications involve single units, thereby minimizing opportunities for our customers to offset our higher prices. Simply put, our higher prices are generally associated with the effort and costs BEGNEAUD expends in finishing our enclosures, both inside and out. Many potential customers feel the cosmetic quality we provide, especially on the internal and other normally non-

visible portions of our enclosures, adds little or no value to them in today's very competitive marketplace. Accordingly, BEGNEAUD now offers customers the option of specifying the level of cosmetic quality they desire on the non-visible portions of their enclosures. As always, BEGNEAUD will not compromise on the cosmetic quality of those portions of our enclosures that are normally visible.

Aside from the oilfield industry, there are also other numerous applications where an enclosure may be used. For example, BEGNEAUD implemented pedestal-style enclosures to enclose the power, wiring, air supply and welding gases in the newly built addition of the welding facility at BEGNEAUD. There are numerous components and details in the architecture of the enclosures, including a swing plate - when the door is open, the sub plate swings out.

Our equipment and lasers are second to none, but our team is the most important aspect of the quality we provide. Our experience with enclosures and our commitment to quality combine to offer truly unique advantages to our customers. Although our prices may be somewhat higher than other similar products, the quality, durability and repeatability we deliver generally offsets the price difference, by increasing customer satisfaction and reducing our customers' internal costs associated with assembling the end product. ■

Time to think 'outside the box'



▲ Clock designed by Cindy Stansbury, BEGNEAUD Customer Service Department

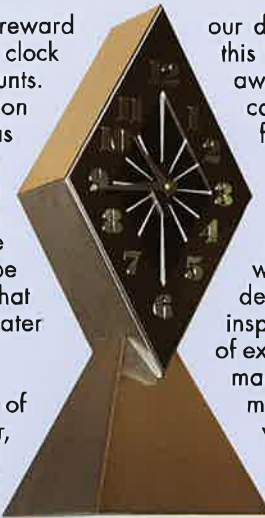
At BEGNEAUD, we like to have fun and reward creativity at the same time. Our recent clock design contest was a winner on both counts. The contest was inspired by Don Begneaud's desire to stimulate new ideas and new applications of existing technology: "I've seen clocks made using sheet metal components in Europe and in art galleries in the states. I always thought it would be fascinating to create one. I also know that more minds provide greater creativity."

Every employee was encouraged to submit a hand sketch of a clock design. Myra Robin, CAD Department Supervisor, coordinated the contest. There were two rounds of judging. The first determined which six designs would be manufactured, and the second selected first and second place winners. To avoid any bias, the judges for both rounds of blind judging were not BEGNEAUD employees.

As it turns out, Myra won first place. "During the hand sketch I kept in mind the various processes available at BEGNEAUD," she says. "The criteria asked us to incorporate as many processes as possible into our designs. I wanted to do something different, and I knew we could try pretty much anything within reason. If this had been a production piece I would have done things differently. Since it was one of a kind we were given a lot of freedom in



▲ Clock designed by Erin Begneaud, UL Lafayette architecture student



▲ The award winning clock, designed by Myra Robin, BEGNEAUD CAD Supervisor

our designs. I would like to see this be a benchmark for future award initiatives." With her cash prize Myra took her family out to dinner.

Chris Guilbeau, CAD Specialist, was the second place winner. Chris' design was inspired by: "years of experience at BEGNEAUD. It is a collaboration of many designs that I have seen. I am going to use my cash winnings on my vacation."



Second place winning clock, ▲ designed by Chris Guilbeau, BEGNEAUD CAD Department

BEGNEAUD Customer Service Representative Cindy Stansbury offered a unique twist with her design. "I designed a box clock because I like multi functional objects. I saw a similar wooden clock in an antique store."

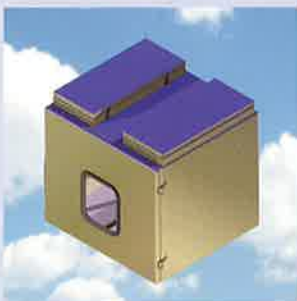


▲ Clock designed by Bryan Lagrange, BEGNEAUD CAD Department

Enthusiastic football fan Bryan Lagrange, CAD Specialist, found his inspiration in the New Orleans Saints.

"By encouraging employees to express their creativity, we become open to more diversity in our design approaches," Don concludes.

BEGNEAUD moves deeper into 3-D with Solid Edge



▲ A Solid Edge 3-D rendering of an enclosure.

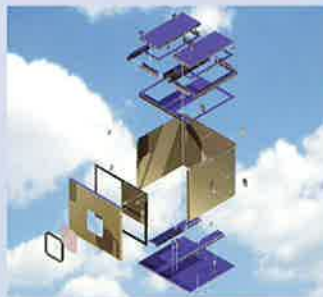
Computer-aided design (CAD) in the manufacturing industry is rapidly evolving from 2-D to 3-D systems, and BEGNEAUD is keeping pace with that growth. We receive work orders from our customers in various forms, ranging from drawings on napkins and electronic data to requests to reverse engineer an existing part.

These jobs range from simple-geometry flat parts to complex assemblies that contain multiple flat and formed components. To meet the demands of our diverse clientele, BEGNEAUD chose

Electronic Data System Corporation's (EDS) Solid Edge as its primary CAD system.

In many ways we've been ahead of the curve; we purchased Solid Edge Version 3 in 1998. Because we employ state-of-the-art, precision TRUMPF lasers, punches and press brakes at BEGNEAUD, we require first-class CAD software.

Solid Edge has enabled BEGNEAUD to design complex assemblies with great precision, eliminating many of the fit errors a 2-D CAD system cannot detect. A reduction in fabrication time has been one of the many rewards of this transition.



▲ A Solid Edge rendering of an exploded view of an enclosure.

Solid Edge has also enabled the BEGNEAUD CAD department to compile a database containing the variables used by TRUMPF press brakes. This database allows us to generate accurate flat pattern geometry for formed pieces that not only contain multiple 90-degree bends but also multiple obtuse and acute angles, all with an accuracy up to +/- 1 degree with a flange height within

+/- .004 of an inch of a specified dimension. These are just a couple of examples of how Solid Edge has given BEGNEAUD an advantage over its competition.

EDS estimates that 400,000 2-D users will migrate to 3-D during the next two years. BEGNEAUD recognized this paradigm shift early and has reaped the benefits of having advanced, trained Solid Edge designers with an average of three years' experience working in 3-D environment software. The 3-D movement is upon us in the manufacturing industry, and BEGNEAUD - along with Solid Edge - is leading the way.

The BEGNEAUD Touch

Rain or shine BEGNEAUD proves there is an ever-increasing interest in the world of manufacturing in Lafayette, La. We recently played host to the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's monthly Business After Hours event. The day was rainy and overcast; however, as 5 p.m. approached the rain subsided and nearly 200 Chamber members and guests paid us a visit. Tours of the BEGNEAUD facility were given and our high-tech equipment was demonstrated throughout the evening. Local Cajun cuisine restaurant Prejean's provided a delicious array of hors d'oeuvres.



◀ Celeste Begneaud assisted in greeting and welcoming guests at the Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event.

▼ A group of attendees, including Jeanne Lantier, enjoy refreshments in the BEGNEAUD annex before their tour.



Jeanne Lantier, Community Relations Representative of United Blood Services, was among the attendees and she described the evening as "a very nice event. The food was great. I thought the tours were very eye-opening because I didn't realize how vast the operation is. It's a lot bigger than I thought."

Arlene Broussard, Membership Director of the Chamber, said: "From my first visit to BEGNEAUD Manufacturing, I knew I had found something special. After meeting Don and Andy Begneaud I knew why. I was impressed with the products and the equipment used to make them, the cleanliness of the plant, the variety of items produced from the materials used, the lack of waste I could go on about such things, but what impressed me as much was the attitude of the people who work there. They were happy, because they are well trained and well treated. There's a certain pride that comes out as they talk about and show off their work. The Begneauds realize that their people are their greatest assets. Combine that with the fact that they truly are 'The Innovators' and they've got a winning combination, and Lafayette is proud to call them ours!"

To learn how your company or organization can participate in a tour of BEGNEAUD please phone (337) 237-5069. ■

Calendar of Events

October 7-11	INTECH (TRUMPF In House Tradeshow), Germany
October 21	AWS (American Welding Society) Regional Meeting at BEGNEAUD
October 21-28	EMO, Milan, Italy
October 28-30	LAGCOE (La. Gulf Coast Oil Exposition), Lafayette, La.
October 31	25th Anniversary of BEGNEAUD
November 1	All Saints' Day
November 16-19	FABTECH International North America's Largest Annual Metal Forming and Fabricating Event, Chicago, IL
November 28	Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
December 4-5	FMA Education Roundtable at BEGNEAUD
December 25	Closed for Christmas Holiday

Employee Anniversaries

October	Jim Ousse	5 years
	Mark Faul	16 years
November	Dawn Comeaux	4 years
	Chris Boudreaux	1 year
December	Joe Cagle	6 years
	Kelly Schultz	2 years
	Brent Simmons	1 year

Contributors

Writing: Andy Begneaud, Don Begneaud, Dawn Comeaux, Bryan Lagrange, and Tiffany Privat
Photography: Don Begneaud and Tiffany Privat

Member of:



Louisiana Association of Business and Industry



Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce



Society of Manufacturing Engineers



Mothers Against Drunk Drivers



American Welding Society



LAFAYETTE EDUCATION FOUNDATION



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