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Wednesday, April 26, 2023 | WINTERSET, IOWA | Volume CLXVII | No. 35 | Phone: 515-462-2101 | Fax: 515-462-2102

Grip-Tite launches new product in utility market



Madisonian photo/Vicki Minor

Grip-Tite has been producing anchoring and piercing products since 1921. Grip-Tite CEO, Steve Lage, explained the new Power-Grip Anchor to his employees during a recent product launch celebration. This new product will create a large amount of growth for the local manufacturer.

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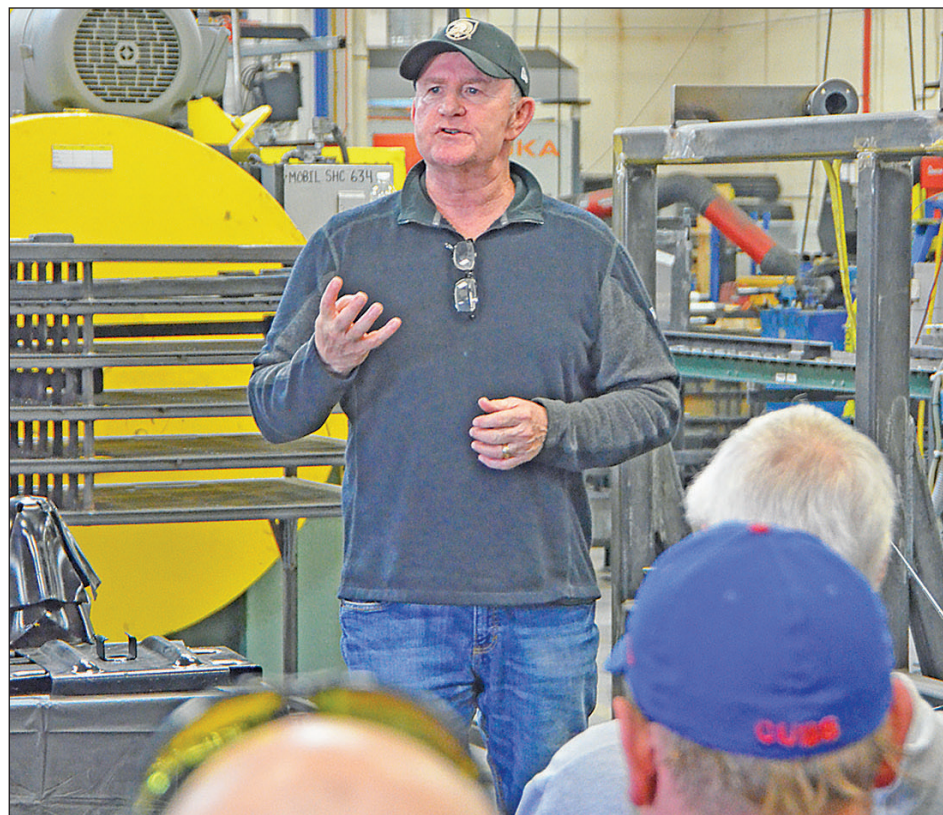
Since 1921 Grip-Tite Manufacturing Co., L.L.C. has been producing anchoring and piercing products. Anchors for the electrical grid became necessary after WWII, and by the 1950s the company had established itself as a leading manufacturer of expanding and cross plate anchors for the electrical industry. Customers included electrical distributors from across the United States.

In 2008, Grip-Tite agreed to be an exclusive supplier of anchors for MacLean Power Systems. As this agreement dissolved in 2021 the company returned to selling its legacy anchors directly to electrical distributors in January of 2022. Reconnecting with previous clients, allowed the company to learn that a helical anchor was much more popular than the anchors it was currently producing. In fact,

about 10 helical anchors are used for every expanding or cross plate anchor. The Grip-Tite team quickly investigated the process for making the helical anchors, deciding to move forward in March of 2022.

After acquiring all the equipment and tooling needed to make the new anchors, the company assembled a team to design the manufacturing cells to make them as efficiently as possible. This team considered dozens of layouts and manufacturing alternatives until they were certain they had designed the best cells possible. They built mocked up cells to test the process, mindful of any problems in regards to safety, quality, material flow, and line balance. A few adjustments were made until the team had the design they wanted.

Just one year from the decision



Madisonian photos/Vicki Minor

Left: Grip-Tite Engineering Manager, Jordan Mask demonstrated how the new product will be manufactured after first heating the steel extension to 2200° F. **Right:** Former ISU Wrestling head coach and Iowa Hall of Fame inductee Jim Gibbons owns the building where Grip-Tite is located. Gibbons addressed the audience and talked about the importance of small-town Iowa in our culture and country.

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move forward, the new cells were up and running in 2023. Team members began producing the new Power-Grip Anchors in early March.

Steve Hawrylak is the owner of Hawrylak and Associates, a manufacturer's sales representative located in Arlington, Texas. They are one of about seven representatives that Grip-Tite partners with throughout the United States.

Hawrylak and Associates sold the first two orders of Power-Grip Anchors shipping to Arkansas on March 31, with a second order shipped to Colo-

rado a few days later.

Hawrylak and Associates, along with several of the other representatives, have been aggressively selling the manufacturer's legacy products and introducing our new products to distributors in the US and Central America.

Commemorating the first sale of its new product a mid afternoon celebration was held recently on the production floor of the facility. Employees filled the presentation area amongst balloons, snacks, and commemorative shirts as CEO Steve Lage explained that the new products would create a large amount of growth for the manufacturer.

Lage also introduced former ISU Wrestling head coach and Iowa Hall

of Fame inductee Jim Gibbons, who owns the building where Grip-Tite is located. Gibbons addressed the audience and talked about the importance of small-town Iowa in our culture and country.

He explained that American manufacturing faces a strong future as customers are demanding more and more products be made in America. Gibbons also shared one of his keys to success as a world class wrestler, coach and business leader.

The celebration wrapped up with a demonstration of the forging process by Grip-Tite Engineering Manager, Jordan Mask, who described the manufacturing process as employees and honored guests looked on.

The demand for the new product in the utility market will determine how many manufacturing technicians the company will need to operate this work cell.

Grip-Tite plans to hire approximately 15 new employees specific to this product launch and will plan accordingly for future needs. Additionally, due to growing demand for the manufacturer's established product lines for the utility and foundation repair markets, the company will be hiring approximately another 15 employees to keep up with growing product demand.

Grip-Tite is hoping to have the most profitable year yet in its 102-year history.