



New Hampshire Ball Bearings, Inc.  
— A Minebea Company —

# inside track

## Astro's Solid Performance in 2007 Recognized by Several Aerospace Customers

Astro ended 2007 on a very strong note by receiving supplier awards from three of its key aerospace customers. United Technologies Corporation (UTC), Bell Helicopter, and Northrop Grumman recognized Astro for a solid track record of on-time deliveries and product quality, and responsive customer service. Bell Helicopter's and UTC's awards also acknowledged Astro's advanced use of lean manufacturing tools to streamline production.

In December, Astro was certified as a **UTC** Supplier Gold recipient for its business with Pratt & Whitney and Sikorsky Aircraft. Astro is only the fifth supplier to Pratt & Whitney—and the only bearing manufacturer—to earn Supplier Gold behind a short list of global



*Astro was honored at Northrop Grumman's 2007 awards luncheon. Present to receive the supplier award were Senior Applications Engineer, Pete Drouin (second from left), Western Region Sales Manager, Walt Sweet, and Senior Sales Engineer, Cortland Strong.*

businesses that includes Volvo Aero, Singapore Aerospace Manufacturing, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Exotic Metals. Astro is also the very first Sikorsky supplier to achieve this milestone.

Astro achieved UTC Supplier Gold, which is one of the most comprehensive supplier assessments in the aerospace

industry, by achieving 97% on-time delivery to customer requirements and Zero Significant Escapes during the last 12 months. It earned a lean assessment score of 398, surpassing the Gold threshold of 350, and a customer satisfaction score of 6.12 out of a possible 7. "NHBB's results are a tribute to the efforts of their employees and their active use of lean principles," said Anna Patrizzi, director, Small Hardware Parts Center (SHPC), Pratt & Whitney. "We are proud to have them as part of our value stream."

**Bell Helicopter** awarded Astro with a Premier Supplier Award in November, citing Astro's solid on-time delivery performance, consistently high product quality, and advanced use of lean manufacturing tools. Astro's customer service department also received an excellent review from Bell. According to Gail Knight, Strategic Commodity Manager, the NHBB personnel assigned to Bell's account are extremely

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*Astro was recognized as a Gold Supplier at UTC's first Supplier Gold Conference held in December, 2007. Over 100 suppliers for Pratt & Whitney were present for the day-long summit, which included presentations and exhibits from Gold suppliers and remarks from two large P&W customers, Bombardier and the U.S. Air Force. Shown here presenting the award to NHBB are Jothi Purushotaman, vice president, UTC Operations (left), Steve Finger, president, Pratt & Whitney, and Art Soucy, vice president P&W Global Supply Chain (far right). Receiving the award on behalf of Astro are Katie Ames, inside sales supervisor, Jim Oechsler, NHBB senior account representative, and Jim St. Pierre, Operations Manager.*



## Precision's Delivery Performance Cruising Along at High Altitude



*Precision's assembly area is rated a Class 1000 Clean Room.*

At most facilities around the globe, the last day of every month is often a time of intense effort, when employees from various departments descend on shipping to help package orders slated for delivery. At the Precision Division lately, the last day has also marked another record-setting month of steady and increasing production and shipments.

Continuing the superlative performance of the previous four months, Precision's on-time delivery in January was 96%. Precision has also strung together five months of zero past due orders at month's end—an incredible result given its healthy backlog and steady growth of new orders. The data is based on NHBB's own measure of performance, which typically exceeds industry standards.

The consistent performance of Precision's machine shop and assembly department, coupled with its proactive approach to customer service, has earned the division the 2007 Supplier of the Year Award from Kaman Fuzing and recognition from numerous customers, most recently Lockheed Martin.

When asked what it takes to achieve industry-leading service levels from month to month, Precision's Operations Manager, Paul Spencer, summed it up in one simple phrase: "unwavering focus on customer needs"

Said Paul, "Our on-time performance is a product of continuous focus on schedule adherence by the machine shop and assembly, as well as a proactive approach to customer service from the sales and production control departments."

According to Sales Manager Alan Paynter, Precision's customer focus is the offshoot of a company-wide strategic objective—World Class Customer Service. "Exceptional service involves being proactive and open about our delivery commitments and challenges," he said.

Alan also noted the importance of flexibility. "Even with our solid backlog, we are invariably able to offer adaptive delivery scheduling to suit our customers' needs," he said. "And if we have to, we'll release internal manufacturing orders based on a forecast before receiving the purchase order, which ensures that our customers receive their orders when they need them, not when it's available based on our lead times."



Alan applauded manufacturing for achieving a high degree of flexibility within their systems and procedures. "Paul's team has done an excellent job of meeting aggressive scrap reduction targets and improving product flow through the entire facility," he said. "Such efforts have made it possible for us to exceed our customers' expectations." ●

## Aerospace OEM Honors HiTech

Hamilton Sundstrand recently honored the HiTech Division for its outstanding service during a time-sensitive and critical bearing design project. HiTech earned the tribute by exceeding an aggressive design and production timetable, enabling Hamilton Sundstrand to meet its delivery schedule for a sub assembly related to the GP 7000 jet engine program. The GP 7000 is designed for the Airbus A380, the new superjumbo jet now entering commercial flight service.



*Jim Geary accepts on HiTech's behalf a special service award from Patricia Lavendier of Hamilton Sundstrand.*

"Hamilton Sundstrand is pleased to present HiTech with this special award for outstanding service," said Patricia Lavendier, Program Manager for the GP 7000. "Our deepest appreciation and thanks go to HiTech's entire team for their critical role in the overall success of this program."

Lavendier praised HiTech for remaining on-task and ahead of schedule throughout this highly visible and important program. "Thanks to their superior management and their team spirit, HiTech not only met their scheduled delivery date, they beat it by two weeks," said Lavendier. "The additional margin they provided was a huge boost to the overall program schedule."

HiTech's Sales Manager, Jim Geary, responded by saying how proud the division was to receive the award. "It demonstrates the success of our long-term strategy to serve as a responsive technical resource and key supplier to customers in the aerospace market." ●

## Carburizing Added to HiTech's NADCAP Accreditation

It's official. HiTech now holds a NADCAP accreditation for its new in-house heat treatment capability: carburizing. HiTech was awarded a 24-month accreditation under NADCAP's supplier merit program following a successful audit conducted in November of 2007.

HiTech's Met Lab began developing an in-house carburizing process after the heat treat expansion project was completed in 2005. Using a Six Sigma methodology, the development team identified key inputs and parameters to the process, then ran countless tests and spent many hours analyzing the results. Once the team was able to determine the correct variables to a repeatable process, they turned to documenting the carburizing procedure and writing instructions for quality and testing.

"During the audit, we simulated production runs based on customer designs," said Steve Carey, manager of HiTech's Met Lab and Heat Treat facility. "We needed to demonstrate that we could consistently achieve the case hardening requirements called for in customer specifications, and we did."

The accreditation will appear in the Online QML on [www.eauditnet.com](http://www.eauditnet.com). HiTech also holds NADCAP certifications in heat treatment, hardness testing, metallography and non-destructive testing (NDT). ●



HiTech adds carburizing to its list of NADCAP accreditations.

## Roller Bearing Production Turns Fifteen

In late 1993, when HiTech began to ship cylindrical roller bearings, it delivered a few dozen bearings a month to a handful of companies. Today, HiTech ships thousands of roller bearings each month to many more customers. In fact, January's shipments were at an all time high.

HiTech's Sales Manager, Jim Geary, attributes HiTech's success to excellent timing, good execution by engineering and manufacturing, and responsive sales and service.

"A strong example of our ongoing success is the fact that we continue to support the same customers who were with us from the beginning," said Jim.

HiTech manufactures complex roller bearing assemblies up to 300 mm O.D. They are used in a wide array of commercial and military aircraft applications. These high precision bearings often include special features—mounting flanges, puller grooves, and anti-rotation tabs—that add some challenge to manufacture but provide benefit to the customer. Please contact HiTech for more information at 603.924.4100. ●



## NHBB Convenes Inside Sales Summit



NHBB held its first-ever inside sales summit last month in conjunction with the Central Region sales meeting. Representatives from the inside sales teams from each division got together at the Precision Division in Chatsworth, CA for two days of training, information sharing, team building, and a factory tour. The attendees handle many of the same customers, so the meeting gave them a chance to discuss how best to manage these accounts. Participants included (back row from left): Senior Sales Engineer Terrie Maddox, Senior Sales Engineer Joe Marn, Central Regional Sales Manager Mike Katra, and Astro Division Inside Sales Representative Cheryl Bussiere. Front row: Distributor Sales Manager Mike Smith, Senior Sales Engineer Josh King, Senior Sales Engineer Jeff Schad, HiTech Division Inside Sales Representative Frank McLaughlin, and Astro Division Inside Sales Representative Anne Wexler. Not shown are Precision Division Inside Sales Supervisor, Ida Seow, and Inside Sales Representative Rodrigo Martinez. The Astro Division hosted the second inside sales summit in February.



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## Alex Garcia

Manager of Applications and Design Engineering for the Precision Division

Years at NHBB: 9

## NHBB In Person

Meet Alex Garcia, Manager of Applications and Design Engineering for the Precision Division. Alex joined the Precision Division in 1999 as an Applications Engineer. He became the department supervisor in 2005 then was promoted to manager in 2007. At last year's national sales meeting, NHBB presented Alex with the Extra Mile Award for his dedication to customer satisfaction.

As manager, Alex balances a myriad of objectives related to product design, analysis, and testing. In addition to supervising a staff of engineers and technicians, Alex works closely with the Sales, Quality Assurance and Manufacturing Departments on design-related production requirements. He conducts frequent engineering and sales force training seminars, and he continues to work directly with customers, consulting on new bearing designs and providing technical support for existing products.

Looking to the future, Alex is focused on keeping pace with industry trends and customer needs while maintaining a competitive edge. He is committed to maintaining the division's position as a strong technical force and is doing so by developing a world class R&D Lab with the help of Alex Metrikin, the lab's supervisor. Alex Garcia is also working on a plan to increase data management and accessibility in order to streamline the flow of technical information.

"The people I work with are the best part of my job," says Alex. "I enjoy working closely with customers and acquiring new knowledge about their latest technological innovations."

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customer-oriented. "They are very prompt with returning calls and providing quotes, supportive of Bell's initiatives and flexible regarding our various demands," said Ms. Knight. "Overall, NHBB is a pleasure to deal with."

For the second straight year **Northrop Grumman Corporation** (NGC) named Astro a Platinum Source Preferred Supplier for NGC's Integrated Systems Sector. To qualify, Astro achieved 100% quality for products shipped during the previous 12 months, matching last year's performance, and maintained a stellar rate of on-time deliveries. Initiated in 2004, Northrop Grumman's Supplier Award program is part of the company's strategic sourcing initiative



Gail Knight (L), Strategic Commodity Manager for Bell, presented Bell's Premier Supplier Award to Materials Manager, Barry Wilk, Human Resources Manager, Gary Groleau, and Manufacturing Manager, Bob Hammond.

success to their commitment as strategic partners," said Scott J. Seymour, Northrop Grumman corporate vice president and president of the Integrated Systems sector.

According to Jim St. Pierre, Astro's operations manager, receiving all three awards in the same year is a significant achievement. "We have worked hard to build a strong continuous improvement culture and to implement lean tools that enable us to perform at a higher level," said St. Pierre. "Receiving these awards means

to build stronger long-term business relationships. "Our supplier base is one of the strongest in the industry, and we attribute a significant portion of our

that we are doing the right things to remain a valued supplier to the aerospace market, which is good news for all of our customers." ●