

# Chantland-MHS

Supplying the milling industry with quality products for 75 years.

Sometimes in business circles, the comment might be made that it's far more economical and beneficial to retain customers by earning their loyalty with good products and service rather than

being constrained by a perpetual cycle of having to hunt continually for new ones.

While there are obviously more factors involved in running a successful business, following this longstanding philosophy has served and rewarded Chantland-MHS, Humboldt, IA, well in its 75 years of being in business.

This may sound like a simple way of approaching business, but make no mistake about it. Chantland-MHS, which manufactures belt conveyors, robotic palletizers, and bagging scales, has big aspirations.

"Our driving goal is to be the best material handling company in the world," explains President Jamie Flot. "That's our goal, and we keep that target in sight. How we chart the course to get there in this industry is another story, because there are no shortages of challenges."

During some years, the milling and grain industries might be buying a lot of food-product equipment, and then in other years, the demand might be high for basic building materials like steel and concrete, according to Flot.

"But no matter which way market conditions may swing, we remain vigilant in our day-to-day efforts to stay abreast of any changes and to try to anticipate and understand the needs of our customers fully," he says.

## Finding a Better Way

In many ways, the company was born out of following the age-old proverb that "necessity is the mother of invention."

For example, Flot, who has been with the company for 23 years, recalls how the company's founder, Al Chantland, and his family ran a seed farm near Humboldt and packaged the commodity into 100-pound burlap bags that were filled by hand.

"Intuitively, Al Chantland knew that



*Chantland-MHS' 90,000-square-foot manufacturing facility and headquarters. Aerial photo supplied by Chantland-MHS.*

there had to be a better way," explains Flot. "Al had been watching this labor-intensive method of packing and saw the need for developing a better way to convey these bags more easily and quickly."

So Al designed and built a slat conveyor made mostly from wood, with two chains on each side of the wooden slats that allowed someone to fill the bag and then toss it on to the conveyor, according to Flot. Once the bags were filled and stitched, the conveyor also made it easier for someone to grab the bags from the line and stack them on pallets or wherever they needed to be stored.

"Al developed a prototype conveying system in a machine shop on his farm," explains Flot. "He started exploring various concepts, which eventually led to a working model. Then after a couple of years of using his homemade conveying system, Al saw that other seed companies were experiencing the same problem. Some of those seed firm owners started to stop by Al Chantland's operation and were pretty curious about

his conveying system. A few commented: 'Hey, that's pretty neat; where did you get that?' Al replied back, 'Well, I made that in my shop.' The visitors quickly replied, 'How can we get one?'"

So, that's how the ball really got roll-



Humboldt, IA

515-332-4045

[www.chantland.com](http://www.chantland.com)

**Jamie Flot, President & COO**

## Products

Bulk, Package, and Pallet  
Handling Conveyors

Automatic Bag Placing Equipment

Bag, Box, and Drum Filling Scales

Bulk Bag and Box Handling Systems

Conventional and Robotic  
Bag Palletizers



*Conventional and robotic bag palletizers fully assembled, hard-wired, and plumbed in preparation of factory acceptance tests.*

ing for AI, according to Flot. Those early orders began a chain reaction that led to more innovations that kept the company growing and expanding its product lines.

#### **An Innovator**

One of AI's earlier innovations included developing a process to produce a hydro-crown pulley.

"When using belt conveyors, you need a crown pulley to help track the belt properly," explains Flot. "So, the development of the hydro-crown pulley helped spawn even more business from not only from other seed companies but also other industries.

"The pulley business started to grow

so well that it began taking up more and more room in the plant," says Flot. "So, we purchased a facility in Dakota City, IA, literally just across the railroad tracks from Humboldt, which became our corporate headquarters. Although physically located in Dakota City, we retain our original Humboldt address for postal service. All of our machines including conveyors, bag filling scales, and bag palletizers are manufactured in this facility." ►

#### **A One-Stop Shop**

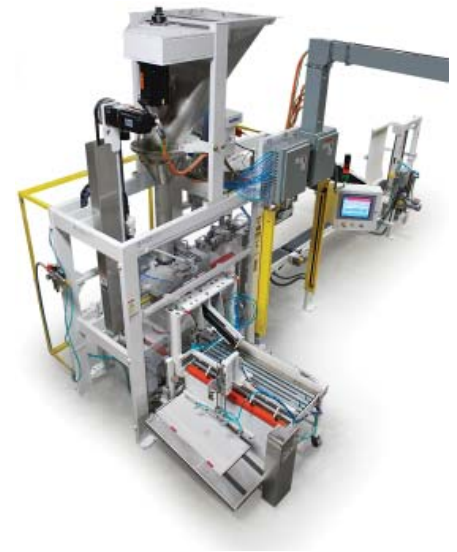
Today, Chantland has grown to 87 employees and its corporate headquarters in Dakota City encompasses 90,000 square feet of production space, where the company specializes in the design, manufacture of its equipment.

"We are one of the few companies in North America that offer a broad range of equipment from one manufacturing facility to handle product from its raw bulk state, through various stages of processing; weigh; and place it in bags, boxes, or other containers; and place it on pallets ready for warehouse storage," explains Flot.

The plant also includes a product testing lab used to examine specific customer materials in various bagging machines and to evaluate performance prior to purchase.

Among the things that set Chantland apart from its competitors is that it is essentially a one-stop shop. It manufactures all of its products under one roof rather than relying on outsourcing – a fact in which the company takes great pride.

"Over the years, we've added to our product line based on industry demand," says Flot. "We follow the



*Chantland AP26000 fully-automatic vertical auger bottom-up bag placing and filling system designed specifically for flour and similar products.*

system approach in developing new products or in refining existing ones, which all are done under one roof. We manufacture and assemble everything in-house, which is probably one of our more notable successes."

The robotic arms for its palletizing line equipment are about the only thing the company does not manufacture, according to Flot.

Chantland MHS also is the No. 1 North American distributor for Fuji Robotics, a distinction it has held since 2006, when they began their relationship. Chantland will buy the robotic arms and controls and fully integrate and interlock them electronically into their systems.

"We set everything up in-house," says Flot. "We wire it, we plumb it, and then we test run it. And then we have the customer come in and look at it and ►



*Chantland duplex bag filling scale and AP2300 bag placing system during factory acceptance test prior to shipment.*

---

"We feel that providing excellent customer service is one of the key guiding principles in doing business. That's one of the key reasons why we usually carry around a million dollars worth of parts in inventory. . ."

---

*- Jamie Flot, president, Chantland-MHS*

---

see it operate. Afterwards, we dismantle only what is necessary for shipment. Our turnaround time also is reduced by the capability to do more things in-house.”

#### **Committed to Customer Service**

Beyond getting the customer up and running quickly, Chantland-MHS is committed to ensuring that its customers remain operational, even in the event of a breakdown. Unlike some warranties that require customers to send in parts for inspection before they are replaced, Flot says Chantland will send the replacement part out first before addressing the warranty question.

“Our philosophy is that we’re going to stand behind what we build,” he says. “So, if a customer’s equipment is down, we’ll ship out the necessary replacement part and have the customer send back the damaged or broken part in question. If it’s still under warranty, we’ll receive the new part and just restock it in our parts inventory.

“We feel that providing excellent customer service is one of the key guiding principles in doing business. That’s one of the key reasons why we usually carry around a million dollars worth of parts in inventory that will be used not only to build new equipment but also to serve our existing customers with parts orders.”



*Chantland uses Fanuc Robots in some systems to place valve bags on pneumatic bag filling scales, as shown in operation at a customer facility.*

In recognition of this commitment, Chantland has been honored with “Preferred Supplier” status for numerous firms within North America and several leading global corporations.

“Build quality equipment – then back it up” is one of the founding principles of the company and is the reason its customers worldwide rely on Chantland equipment in their facilities.

#### **Coming Full Circle**

Of course, none of the company’s growth would be possible without a team of dedicated employees across a variety of departments. According to Flot, no one person or department can take credit for Chantland’s success.

“I like to think that we promote teamwork here,” he says. “One of the big things that I try to underscore is that none of us can run this company by ourselves. We all need to pull together, because we’re all part of the business. Without salespeople, there’s nothing to build; without engineering, there’s no drawings to build from; and without manufacturing’s great ability to make durable and high-quality products, sales wouldn’t have anything to sell. It all comes full circle.”

*Robert Nieminen, contributing writer*