**GS: Give us a little background on the company.**

**JR:** DECO Products has been in business since 1960, and we’re based in Decorah, Iowa. I’ve been with the company for the past 12 years. We have 325 employees, more than 151,000 square feet of manufacturing space, and our core business involves producing precision zinc die castings, applying powder coatings, CNC machining, and custom assemblies.

**GS: What does DECO have to offer gear manufacturers?**

**JR:** We have a wealth of knowledge in the die casting industry, in particular zinc castings. Along with that we have engineers to provide their assistance and expertise to our current and potential customers in developing their designs. This ensures that, whether they’re improving their current product line or developing a new one—gear or motor housings, for instance—we have the ability to help them. Our engineering manager, Mike Murphy, comes from the motor industry, so he’s fully aware of what’s required for applications of that nature, especially the materials that work best for cases and covers. While there are other materials available out there, zinc lends itself particularly well to gear and motor housings because we can hold such tight tolerances. Zinc provides great bearing surfaces for other components that would go into the gearbox housing, and you can cast them with thinner walls. Plus, in a very high percentage range, the life expectancy of the tooling that’s used to cast the zinc alloy material will outlast other materials. Most of our tools will exceed a million shots in their lifetime. Of course, the more intricate the part in terms of its geometry, the harder it is to get that level of life expectancy, but it does approach that number, even with the more complicated types of castings.

**GS: As custom sales manager, do you have any tips for potential customers?**

**JR:** The issue of design is very important, so as they’re going through the process of developing their product line—especially with a gearbox—it’s crucial to get your current vendor or a new supplier involved in the design process as early as possible. You may have excellent design capabilities that result in top-notch gearing, but the housing for that gearbox is another matter. So it’s extremely important to get your vendor involved early on so that you’ll have a part that meets all your expectations and allows you to hit a home run right out of the gate. It’s hard on tooling to change it once it’s been developed, and you do compromise its life expectancy by doing so. And who needs the headache of having to change your tooling because you went ahead and tooled up for a process and the design wasn’t right? And you may end up spending a lot more money toward additional tooling, so we highly recommend that you get your suppliers involved early on in the product design. Here at DECO Products we welcome the opportunity to be of assistance in the process.

“WE HAVE A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE DIE CASTING INDUSTRY, IN PARTICULAR ZINC CASTINGS, ALONG WITH ENGINEERS TO PROVIDE THEIR EXPERTISE TO OUR CUSTOMERS IN DEVELOPING THEIR DESIGNS.”

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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