

75 Years of Shaping the Sheet Metal Fabrication Industry: Murata Machinery USA's Forming Division Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary

In an era dominated by constant technological and economic change, it is rare to find a technologically based company that has been around for 75 years, much less one that has been a leader in innovation the entire time. But Murata Machinery USA, Inc., located in Charlotte, NC, has been a world leader in forming machinery technology, specializing in sheet metal fabrication applications, service and sales of turret punch presses and material handling equipment.

For 75 years, Murata has been a pioneer in the sheet metal fabrication industry, with innovations dating back to the first turret punch press without a center post, the R2. The R2 was designed in 1932 and manufactured for production in 1934 by Theodore Wiedemann.

Wiedemann was a master machinist from Germany who first set foot on American soil in 1888. By 1916, Theodore and his brother launched Wiedemann Machine Company in Philadelphia, which made machines that were ahead of their time, designing and producing devices ranging from automatic meat slicers to paint filling machines. In the 1930's the company narrowed its focus to the precision fabrication industry with the turret punch press.

By World War II, demand for aviation parts fueled a period of explosive growth for the Wiedemann Machine Company. After the war, the company continued its flair for innovation by unveiling the first numerically controlled machine, the A15, at the IMTS show in Chicago in 1955. By 1958, Wiedemann Machine employed 280 craftsmen and a line of turret punch presses that were renowned throughout the sheet metal fabrication industry for their durability and accuracy.

In 1964, the Wiedemann Machine Company was purchased from the Wiedemann family by the Warner & Swasey Company, which introduced the first CNC turret punch press, the Wiedematic W2040, at IMTS in 1970. That same year, the Warner-Swasey Company launched a joint venture with Murata Machinery Ltd., located in Kyoto, Japan. Blank sheet production was raised to new levels with the introduction of the first CNC Right Angle Shear in 1976, the OS 412. Murata Warner Swasey also unveiled the world's first Flexible Manufacturing System (FMS) at Mitsubishi Switchgear and the first compact, numerically controlled turret punch press, the Centrum-1000, in 1983.

After recognizing the future potential and value of the Wiedemann Division, Murata Machinery Limited purchased the entire Wiedemann line from Warner-Swasey in 1989. In 1990, the two companies merged, forming equipment lines branded under the Murata Wiedemann name. Eventually, the Wiedemann name was phased out but not forgotten. Today, Murata Machinery continues to offer a wide array of machine tools marketed under the parent company of Muratec. Each machine also features the Wiedemann name.

In 1994, Murata Machinery changed the evolution of the turret punch with the introduction of the first electric servo punch drive – the Motorum 2000 series – which has since become a standard in the industry. Murata also launched revolutionary changes in productivity with the introduction of the first turret punch featuring a turret changer, the NPS-01, and the Motorum 2558 Hybrid, which combines electric turret punch capabilities with laser contour cutting.

That same spirit of innovation, durability and accuracy live on in Murata Machinery USA. “We always listen to the needs of our customers and react with products that push them ahead of the competition,” explained Lloyd Keller, National Sales Manager, Murata Machinery USA. “Our products are designed as a solution to the user’s requirements for the future that addresses improving efficiency, profits and the environment.”

Today, Murata Machinery USA remains committed to the traditional values of craftsmanship with engineered products for the future. The company's sheet metal forming division produces and markets a wide range of machines, with punching capacities ranging from 22 to 45 U.S. tons. The machine configurations range from hydro-mechanical to the new servo electric drive with contouring options of plasma and laser, as well as a full line of stockers, loaders, and sorting equipment.

Murata Machinery USA’s Motorum line also offers the latest in sheet metal fabrication technology and reliability, with automation options that take unmanned productivity to new heights with exceptional returns on investment. The division’s equipment is distributed throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico by the Muratec dealer network, which also provides service support.

Murata Machinery USA, Inc. is a subsidiary of Murata Machinery Ltd., located in Kyoto, Japan. The machine tool division produces a variety of metalworking machines for the metal-forming and metal-cutting industries and continues to be a world leader in the manufacture and design of high-productivity metal working machines.

For more information, visit <http://www.muratec-usa.com> or call 800-428-8469.

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