



FOR RELEASE
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CopperBot connection helps OcuGlass

Calumet, MI – OcuGlass, an acid-etched glass manufacturer located in the Houghton County Airport Park, continues to find opportunities in the community to solve unique problems. The company has previously received assistance from local schools and universities and a similar collaboration has recently been formed. After purchasing production equipment parts from different vendors around the country and internationally, as well as attempts at machining parts in-house, OcuGlass engineers explored a new idea. They had heard about CopperBots, a program at the Calumet High School, and made contact. Ongoing success with their relationship with the SOAR program at Dollar Bay High school made this seem like a good concept to pursue.

The Calumet CopperBots are a robotics team comprised of students who attend Calumet High School. They build a robot in six weeks and then participate in regional, state, and world competitions. The students are guided and mentored by an industry-web made up of several district teachers, local machinists and engineers, and Michigan Technological University computer science and engineering students. As part of their robot building, they have the tools and knowledge to machine parts at the school.

Todd Waurio, coach of the CopperBots, said "OcuGlass has created an opportunity for our team to work with their engineers and their MTU intern. Together, they refined the design of parts and the students created the parts digitally using computer-aided design software. Our team then made the physical parts to the needed specifications using CNC lathes and mills. The project not only empowers the students by seeing their creation serving a real purpose but gives them the chance to work alongside professionals in an industry they may choose to pursue after high school."

OcuGlass has assigned their Mechanical Engineering Intern, Hunter Richards of Houghton, to be the liaison between the company and the CopperBots. Richards is a student-athlete at Michigan Tech and works part-time as an Intern at OcuGlass. The students and Hunter work together on drawings, materials, and ideas to create and produce parts used on the production lines at the glass manufacturer. These parts are vital for efficient and high-quality operation of the lines. "Working with the Calumet High School students and Todd Waurio has been an awesome experience thus far," said Richards. "They are very motivated and passionate about what we set out to accomplish. It's very unique for the students to be a part of the engineering design process and to be working with a local company. It is something I wish I would've had the opportunity to do in high school. I have greatly benefited from the experience especially learning how to communicate with the students."

OcuGlass has seen many benefits from the collaboration. The parts are being better designed for use than what could be purchased off the shelf. The company pays for the parts and labor but saves a great deal of money and lead time compared to purchasing elsewhere. OcuGlass Director of Engineering Jeff Stevens said, "Our engineering goal is to address problems as opportunities. A collaboration like this with a college student and a local high school is the ultimate opportunity for everyone involved to grow, learn, and thrive while solving real-world problems."

For more information about OcuGlass, please visit their website at www.ocuglass.net or call 906.483.3953. To contact or donate to the CopperBots, visit them at <http://www.copperbots.org/> or call 906.396.9070.