

## **Certified Metalworking Fluid Specialist: Recognizing Professionals -- A Smart Investment**

**John Burke, Houghton International**

John Burke is Chairman of the STLE Metalworking Certification Steering Committee

The Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers (STLE) announces the launch of its new certification program for individuals working across the spectrum of metalworking fluid specialties -- Certified Metalworking Fluids Specialist™ (CMFS). The program will test and recognize experienced professionals, and raise the bar for the industry as a whole. Candidates for the CMFS designation include on-site contract metalworking fluid site managers who work day-to-day in the OEM and Tier 1 and Tier II industries, on-site technicians who perform daily analytical measurements, salesmen, off-site technicians, laboratory managers, formulators, equipment suppliers, end-user chemists, consultants, and other industry experts.

The program will be introduced at STLE's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, May 15-19, 2005 in Las Vegas. CMFS is the second of two new initiatives from STLE in association with the Society for Metalworking Engineers (SME). The first initiative, the Metalworking Fluid Certificate Training Program, was launched in November 2004 by the SME last year and will also be offered at the STLE Annual Meeting this year. Plans are in place for another offering in the Fall of 2005.

### **Why Certification?**

There is an emerging need to recognize outstanding professionalism in the metalworking fluids sphere. Downsizing of non-core activities is a continuing trend in the automotive OEM, Tier 1 and Tier II business groups. Other metalworking industry groups such as agriculture, aerospace, steel, bearing, fabricated metals, wire drawing, and can manufacturing have similarly followed the outsourcing trend. The number of engineers, metallurgists, and chemists with whom metalworking fluid and lubricant industry representatives work has been reduced dramatically over the last 10 years. The relatively few labs that still exist are mere skeletons of what they once were. Despite this downsizing, these industries are still very active -- machine tools are still made, fluids still used, and automotive and durable goods still produced. So who is doing the work?

Much of the work has been outsourced to independent lubricant manufacturers. Some of the outsourced work is performed on-site, while other activities are performed off-site (particularly lab support). These activities are found under the umbrellas of various acronyms such as TFM (total fluid management) and TCM (total chemical management). The work varies from off-site analytical support, to on-site basic measurement and control, to full-time metalworking fluid site management involving technical management, procurement, inventory control and disposal management. The supply base can call on an OEM customer; in many cases, the first line of contact is an outsourced service metalworking fluid site manager. At no time during this outsourcing shift has there been a call for a "proof of competence" for much of this manufacturing activity -- until recently.

### **Proving Competence, Striving for Excellence**

In early 2004, the Society for Metalworking Engineers (SME) announced its collaboration with STLE to establish the highly successful Metalworking Certificate Training Program and has endorsed the new STLE CMFS program. The CMFS program mirrors existing STLE certification programs such as Certified Lubrication Specialist® (CLS), and Oil Monitoring Analyst® (OMA) I and II. Individual STLE members representing OEM automotive manufacturers, aerospace,

construction, and MWF suppliers (listed in the box) have worked for 15 months to launch this new certification to advance excellence in the metalworking fluids arena.

#### **Companies represented on the STLE Metalworking Fluid Steering Committee**

DaimlerChrysler	Etna Products
Ford	Houghton International
General Motors	Master Chemical
Pratt and Whitney	Caterpillar
D.A. Stuart	Biodeterioration Control Associate
Bill Lucke (Consultant)	Chemical Solutions, Inc.

Certification is distinct from the Metalworking Certificate Training program. The Certificate Training program is an effort to train more people entering the field, whereas certification will enhance the professional qualifications of experienced practitioners. In the Certificate Training program, an individual takes several courses and at the end of the coursework, is tested on his or her understanding of the new subject matter. Alternatively, certification is not preceded by a specific training course. The certification exam tests an experienced individual's judgment and knowledge over a wide variety of topics and situations encountered in the field.

#### **Qualifications for the Exam**

Certification requires a combination of experience and formal education to take the exam. For the CMFS exam, these pre-requisites are:

- Experience
  - individuals working in a manufacturing environment, such as fluid specialist or fluid manager: 3 years OR
  - individuals working in a laboratory environment, such as technical support chemist or research chemist: 5 years.
- Education
  - minimum: two-year degree in science, manufacturing technology or business; coursework including general chemistry, biology; AND
  - minimum 20 hours internal or external training in metalworking fluids applications and management.

#### **Investing in People**

CMFS is a smart investment strategy for our industry. Individuals and their companies will benefit in a myriad of ways while the metalworking fluids industry as a whole will become more innovative and efficient. Here are a few examples:

- Organizations are increasingly seeking metrics for employee performance and talent. CMFS will give companies a way to mark continuous improvements for their employees – both on-site and off-site. CMFS provides a continuing assessment platform of those capabilities and talents over time. Sitting for future exams will maintain an individual's certification.
- A certified metalworking fluids specialist will likely recognize a problem developing before the problem happens – helping to reduce costs and improve efficiency down the line.
- Certified individuals will have demonstrated excellence and be in a more marketable position in industry relative to those who are not certified.

Certified individuals will begin to appear sometime in mid-2005. The Certified Metalworking Fluid Specialist™ (CMFS) logo will be trademarked and allowed for use on a business card, much the same way as CLS®.

For more information on STLE and the CMFS program, visit <http://www.stle.org/cmfs/index.cfm>.