

Wenzel Geartech Announces North America's Largest Gear Measuring Machine Order For Inspecting Windmill Gears And Gearboxes

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Vancouver Gear Works Ltd. in Richmond, British Columbia (www.vangear.com) has purchased what is believed to be North America's largest GMM gear measuring machine from the Wenzel GearTech Division of Wenzel/Xspect Solutions, Inc. The new Model LHF GMM 30.60.20 is a traveling bridge-type measuring machine with a 6 meter (19.68 ft) x 3 meter (9.84 ft) x 2 meter (6.56 ft) measuring range capable of measuring gears up to 3 meters (9.84 ft) in diameter as well as other large housings and components. The unique measuring machine design, Fig. 1, has two three meter measuring zones; one equipped with a 1000mm (3.28 ft) hydrostatic rotary table capable of accommodating gears up to 30,000 lbs, while the other three meter is equipped with a cast iron surface plate for traditional prismatic inspection of housings and other large components. The machine will be delivered in March 2009.

Jim Mantei, General Manger of Vancouver Gear Works Ltd. explains, "Vancouver Gear is a third generation family-owned manufacturer of hardened precision ground gears and other related precision machining services. Since our founding in 1952, our scope of business has evolved as the mining, forestry and energy-related industries that we serve have also evolved. In the last several years we have focused more resources on the energy-related industries where gears and gear related products are prominent. We have invested upwards of \$10 million dollars during that time for state-of-the-art gear manufacturing equipment and ultimately found the need for better methods of inspecting and verifying those precision tolerances. We have recently secured contracts for the manufacture of

large gears and the corresponding parts that are used in the production of windmills. This required purchasing new state-of-the-art inspection equipment to provide the necessary guarantee of our levels of quality. We attended the 2008 IMTS Show specifically for the purpose of finding the optimum measuring equipment for our business, and subsequently selected a \$1.5M Wenzel Gear Measuring Machine."

Keith Mills, president of Wenzel/Xspect Solutions, located in Wixom, Michigan points out, "It took a number of concurrent actions that brought Wenzel and Vancouver Gear Works, Ltd. together for this unique capital equipment purchase. Wenzel/ Xspect Solutions recently entered into a sales partnership with Great Lakes Gear Technologies, located here in Canton, Michigan who over the years has worked closely with Vancouver Gear to provide them new Hofler gear hobbing and grinding equipment."

Ray Mackowsky, Great Lakes Gear Technology president, says, "Because of our company's sales know-how is in gear manufacturing, Vancouver Gear looked to us to provide some recommendations for their specific needs. It was a fairly simple task, since there is only one company in the world that has the size and production-proven accuracy of gear measuring equipment that Vancouver needed...and that is Wenzel. Wenzel already has GMMs installed in the European gear manufacturing facilities of Hansen Transmission and Jahnle-Kestermann and countless others."

Keith Mills adds, "Wenzel GearTech only commenced delivering its gear measuring machines in 2004 and already has 30% share of the world gear inspection market and are the dominant supplier in the large wind-energy gear market. Other gear inspection equipment manufacturers have tried to 'scale-up' existing small machine designs to meet the needs of this rapidly emerging large gear markets. Their equipment has not achieved the critical levels of accuracy and productivity demanded by this market sector. In fact, two such potential suppliers displayed wooden mock-up models at the IMTS."

Additional features on the Vancouver Gear Wenzel LHF 30.60.20 GMM gear measuring machine include a rotary table with an air bearing stage for ease of part positioning, Renishaw laser based scanning probe that offers sub-micron accuracy and OpenDMIS measuring software.

SOURCE: Wenzel Geartech