



The Finishing Touch

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FEATURE PROJECT - Facilities Services Group NORTHWEST TOOL & DIE, GRAND RAPIDS

Northwest Tool & Die in north Walker is a shop that produces dies for the automotive industry. Their market continues to grow and so does the need for faster, more productive equipment. Having purchased a large boring mill, they asked Kent Companies to help construct a foundation and a material table that would fit in the limited space available.

The mill is a 30,000-pound CNC capable of “numerical control cutting”. This means their cad technician can input mathematical equations and program the mill to provide a super flat surface or automatically cut shapes and holes in massive pieces of steel. The mill travels both up and down as well as side to side. It will manage pieces of steel 15’ by 24’ long, and 20” thick.

Kent’s Challenge was to fit this 43’ by 20’ by 5’ thick foundation into an area where the existing building footings could not be compromised. This is where Kent Companies’ experience and abilities provided value engineering to our customer. Our answer was to utilize the expertise of our underpinning division to install helical piers and hold the footing pads in place while we excavated over 400 cubic yards of soil. We needed to provide super flat surfaces on the table and machine base for their equipment to operate properly. Maintaining our schedule without interrupting Northwest’s production took proper coordination from both our crews and the customer.

Everyone knew the goal and the priorities. It was a team effort by both. The foundation was stuffed into a corner of the building making access with concrete difficult. Kent engineered a chute from a concrete bucket and hung that from the facility overhead crane to place concrete and backfill soils.

Kent’s people produced a high quality product, maintained our priorities, and provided service second to none. Northwest Tool & Die will soon be constructing a very large press pit that is over 24’ deep, and “yes” it needs to be constructed inside the building! Kent Companies will be pursuing this job because we are the right contractor for this type of manufacturing facility project. We are able to specialize and provide a complete package to our customers.



This machine base is 43’ long and super flat



We optimized our resources by engineering a hanging chute for hard to reach areas



The finished product - a custom built high tolerance mill foundation