



SHELDON LABS installed this science lab in a Brookhaven school. The Axis 3 table enables four students to sit at each table during lecture time and lab work while having access to computers at the same time.

## Sheldon Laboratory Systems featured in 'Pointe Innovation Magazine'

By Retha Mayfield

Eddie Adkins, president of Sheldon Labs, is pictured on the cover of the fall edition of *Pointe Innovation magazine*. This is a quarterly magazine that features accomplishments in technology. Published by the Mississippi Technology Alliance, this magazine's stories are all based in Mississippi.

A longtime resident of Crystal Springs might ask, "Where is Sheldon Laboratory Systems?" You'll recognize its location as being that of the GEM Plant (General Equipment Manufacturing) on Kirk Street.

Sheldon Laboratory Systems had its beginning in Michigan in the late 1800's. Sheldon has always had a reputation for originality and quality.

In 1977 Mississippi School Supply Company (MISSCO) bought Sheldon moving the operation to GEM in Crystal Springs.

GEM officially changed its name to Sheldon Laboratory Systems in 1998.

While many Crystal Springs residents commute to Jackson to work each day, Adkins drives from Madison to work at Sheldon in Crystal Springs. This Tennessee native is just as interested in making Sheldon appealing to its employees as he is interested in customer satisfaction of the products sold.

Many of those who work in the plant have been to actual job sites for the product installation. This is a very beneficial step in seeing the product from start to finish.

Customer satisfaction is high on the priority list at Sheldon. Meeting with teachers, finding out their specific needs, and taking this information back to Sheldon's drawing board is a process that could take months. This time consuming procedure is what sets Sheldon apart from its competitors.

In the showroom that displayed many of their products, Adkins explained each one to me including those tables designed with kindergartners in mind. I was surprised to see "science furniture" for preschoolers.

He made an interesting point that promoted his concept. Many people from other countries now hold jobs in the US that require technology. Adkins believes that is our fault. He thinks we need to start introducing science to children at an earlier age.

One product, the Axis 3 Table, is designed for students. There are so

many features available on this model that it reminds me of the list of features available on a new car. There's motorized or manual adjustable table height, rotating computer-monitor well, sink assembly and mobile storage cubicles. This patented design allows students to stay in the same place for lab work and class lectures.

This table, according to the model, can accommodate the standard desktop computers, flat screen monitors or the individual laptops.

There is also a storage cabinet available with rows of shelves used for a computer lap top recharging station. The lap tops will be safely out of sight until their next use.

Another feature of this table is the Unicast and Unimix Service Fixtures for cold water and gas or hot and cold water and gas in a single, streamlined fixture. This is a one-piece fixture with an epoxy outer finish which is far better than a chrome finish.

The Focal Point Teacher's Demonstration Desk enables the teacher to use computer, VCR, LaserDisc player, Elmo and flex camera all from this desk. For those of you who are as technologically challenged as I am, an Elmo is a modernized overhead projector. A teacher can just use a book to be projected on the screen and doesn't have to make a transparency of one of its pages.

There was also a mirror, the size of the desk, mounted in the ceiling above the teacher's desk. A touch of a button would lower the mirror and tilt it at just the right angle so all students in the room could view anything on the teacher's desk. Adkins said that even though this is an old technology it is still popular.

Four individual and distinct colors were glowing from another of the display models. This particular cabinet was divided into four square cells. Each cell was lighted with a different color. The top left cell gave off a beautiful lavender color while the top right's color was red. Blue came from the bottom left. The right bottom cell glowed green. Adkins said this climatarium was used in experimenting with plants. The lighting and temperature could be individually controlled for gathering data on four plants—one placed in each cubicle.

Another item in the showroom was Sheldon's High-Density Shelving which is also built to last. The three metal tracks that these 81" tall shel-

ving units glide on allow the bookcase style units to stack one in front of the other.

"Setting ourselves apart with better products, service and quality pays off," said Eddie Adkins.

Vice President of Operations Jenny Phillips lives in Clinton. She took me on a tour of the plant starting in the mill where the wood is hand picked. Similar wood grains are kept together so the entire job will look as if it belongs together.

The grain on a drawer is matched to the grain of the door below it. All pieces of a job are kept together by a labeling system such as 1 of 3, 2 of 3, etc. Phillips said this is more labor intensive but makes for a higher quality product.

As we walked through the different departments, she explained how solid lumber, hardwood table legs, thru-bolt construction in four corners and oak edge banding or black PVC-edge banding all lend themselves to quality and durability.

While in the plant, we passed by an enclosed cage like structure. This Avery Wildlife Center was designed much like the climatarium for plants with the exception of being for animals. This unit could also have controlled heating, cooling and lighting. The aviary, on the same order as the climatarium, is a controlled environment for animals.

My mind-boggling tour had ended. Up until now, I had no idea how many parts of the world Sheldon Labs reached with their products. Their concern for customer satisfaction has brought them to the drawing table in designing many new things. This is probably the reason they have become the leader in developing science education equipment on the K-12 level.

Besides being popular in all 50 states, their products for school, college, industrial, and healthcare facilities have been shipped to Canada, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and other areas around the world.

The tomato may have put Crystal Springs on the map in the early 1900's giving it the nickname "Tomatopolis of the World." But in 2005 the technology at Sheldon Labs has made our town known in a different circle—school science labs. This multimillion dollar company ships its patented products over many parts of the world.