

Arcade firm Koike Aronson donates water jet cutting device to Alfred University

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ALFRED, NY – Koike Aronson Inc. has donated to Alfred University’s Inamori School of Engineering a machine that uses computer-aided water jet technology to cut through a variety of solid materials. The KoikeJet E60, unveiled at an on-campus ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday, will benefit engineering students and faculty, as well as a variety of engineering-related clubs.

“This is not just a showpiece, it will be part of our curriculum,” said Gabrielle Gaustad, dean of the Inamori School of Engineering. “A lot of people are going to be using this. It will be showcased in our Manufacturing course, and our machine shop is very interested.”

Gaustad said artists have used the equipment to cut materials used in sculptures, and student clubs have used it to cut materials for their projects. Glenn Zwegardt, emeritus professor of sculpture, presented Koike Aronson representatives with a piece of artwork, parts of which were cut on the newly-acquired equipment.

Jim Mighells, technician/machinist in the Inamori School, said the machine, delivered to campus earlier this year, is a welcome addition to the engineering program.

“For five years since I have been here and prior, in senior exit interviews, the students have expressed their desire to have CNC (computer numeric controlled) equipment added to our machine shop,” Mighells said. “Acquisition of this machine is a great opportunity to bring that to reality.”

The KoikeJet E60 water jet machine, located in the engineering labs in Seidlin Hall annex, uses 60,000 pounds per square inch of pressure to cut through a variety of materials, including steel, plastic and glass. CNC technology, in which the machine’s cutting path is mapped out on a computer using specialized software, allows for high-precision cutting.

Koike’s donation was made possible in part by the efforts of Alfred University alumnus Zach Pero, who earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 2018. About a year ago Pero, then a member of the Baja SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) Club at Alfred University, approached Koike Aronson, an Arcade, NY-based manufacturer

of high quality metal cutting, welding and positioning equipment, to solicit a sponsorship ahead of a competition the club was participating in. In Baja SAE competitions, teams from colleges and universities across the country are tasked with designing and constructing a single-seat all-terrain sporting vehicle. Pero was hoping Koike Aronson would use its equipment to cut some steel to be used on the club's competition car. A year later, Koike did Alfred University one better, donating the KoikeJet E60 water jet machine.

Already, the Baja SAE team has used the KoikeJet E60 to cut parts for the vehicle that will be used in this spring's competition. Alfred University's Design-Build-Fly team, which participates in the spring in a competition sponsored by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, has also made use of the new equipment.

"We are happy to help any other clubs or classes that may need our assistance," said Mighells, who manages the engineering STEP Lab and serves as advisor to the Baja SAE club.

Ron Krasnek, International Sales and Marketing manager for Koike Aronson, said his company was happy to provide the equipment to Alfred University.

"We are grateful to be able to work with you to educate young students as they come in and grow," he said. "We're proud to be able to work with you and do this together."

In addition to donating the equipment, Koike provided assistance in getting the machinery set up, and has been putting engineering personnel in touch with third party vendors who have provided materials – such as steel, to cut on the machine; blasting media (abrasives added to the water) – as well as computer software.

Mark Zupan, Alfred University president, thanked Koike for its generosity. "We pride ourselves on having a maker culture at Alfred University. This allows us to build on that," Zupan said.

In the photo above, Koike Aronson's Ron Krasnek explains to mechanical engineering students (from left) Austin Gibson, Noah Briggs and Jaclyn Schnurpfel how the KoikeJet E60 is used.