



Removing molded 1964-1967 Pontiac 326 piston for machining.

They Make Obsolete Vintage Parts

If Egge Machine Company doesn't have the engine part your vintage vehicle needs, they can make it. All you need to provide is a sample, a drawing or specifications. Engine parts and complete kits are avail-

able for vehicles from the early 1900s through the 1980s.

The company is celebrating 95 years of service to antique, collector car, hot rod and muscle car enthusiasts. It operates a state-

of-the-art foundry and machine shop, using high-silicon A-332 aluminum alloy for its automotive pistons. Pistons are cast in original permanent steel molds from the company's wide range of molds.

In addition to old and specialty cars, they manufacture pistons for most automotive, light-truck, ag/industrial and marine applications. They're proud to claim being the only U.S. maker of cast pistons using the A-332 aluminum alloy.

Other services include manufacturing valves from stainless-steel blanks, as well as valve guides. Custom or unidentifiable valves can also be reproduced from a sample.

If new lifters aren't available, the original flat lifters (and lifter adjustment screws) can be resurfaced by Egge to recreate the convex surface required for lifters to spin with the camshaft, reducing wear.

The company remanufactures rocker arms, refacing and rebushing as needed. They also regrind camshafts, restoring horsepower and mechanical harmony, and providing smoother idling, quieter valve action, and more.

One of the more unique services offered by the company is babbitting rods and mains. Engines from the early 1900s to the

mid-1930s generally used Babbitt bearing materials. Chevy also used Babbitt material for connecting rod bearings as late as 1953 on the 216CID and 235CID engines. Egge uses 4X Babbitt, a nickel-based, aircraft-quality material.

The company website offers two special engine resources for visitors. The Egge Engine Tech page provides comprehensive information and visual explanations of major engine components, including compression ring installation, piston ring installation tips, and much more.

"Ask Bob" is a help page that goes beyond most FAQ pages commonly found on company sites. It encourages visitors to submit questions to third-generation co-owner Bob Egge and shares a wide variety of previously submitted questions and answers.

The company encourages showroom visits and factory tours by appointment.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Egge Machine Company, 8403 Allport Ave., Santa Fe Springs, Calif. 90670 (ph 562-945-3419 or 800-866-3443; www.egge.com).

Tabletop Strawberries Help Small Growers

A new Canadian-made strawberry-growing approach is helping more growers meet rising demand for locally grown produce. The A.M.A. Horticulture Strawberry Growing System is a professional-grade gutter system designed for small-scale operations. The first-of-its-kind solution was developed in partnership with Growtec, a leading Canadian gutter-system manufacturer. The partnership's goal was to create a scaled-down version of the system used in large greenhouses, giving smaller growers a greater opportunity.

The do-it-yourself tabletop system comes complete with PE-coated gutters, brackets, irrigation hoses, dripper assemblies, drainage, truss support, tape, galvanized wire components, and more. Available in 92-in. segments, the system allows growers to start small and add as needed. Growers assemble the system on site.

"Strawberry producers let us know exactly what they want to do, and we can

design it to their specifications," says Shawn Mallen, manager of hydroponics and berries at A.M.A. Horticulture. "The system comes complete with everything needed for a 'tabletop' strawberry production system. A.M.A. will guide through the process: explaining the benefits, helping to determine unique needs, determining a cost, assisting with the basics of system operation, and offering aid when questions arise."

Brian Zimmermann, director of sales at Growtec, was aware that smaller producers were eager to enter the strawberry market and was excited to help them succeed.

"When Shawn offered the partnership idea to create a scaled-down version of our gutter system, we jumped at the chance," he says. "We've worked with A.M.A.'s team for a long time in support of the North American strawberry market, and we're excited to help smaller-scale growers produce top-quality berries too."

Mallen explains that Canadians want locally grown strawberries year-round more

than ever, but historically only large-scale production systems were available to growers.

"Now, smaller growers can get started from a place of comfort with their own situation and finances, using a proven and customized growing system," Mallen says. "We can help with multiple layers of the industry, from those just starting in strawberry production, those moving their production from field to tunnels, to research institutions, and even the 'buy local' growers serving their own communities."

The A.M.A. Horticulture Strawberry Growing System is available throughout North America. Because each grower's facilities and resources differ, Mallen encourages all interested parties to contact them via the A.M.A. website for assistance with arranging details such as size, quantity, cost and availability.



Tabletop system is available in 92-in. segments; growers can start small and add as needed.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, A.M.A. Horticulture Inc., 2011 Spinks Dr., Kingsville, Ontario, Canada N9Y 2E5 (ph 800-338-1136; ama@amahort.com; www.amahort.com).

Military Vet Creates Two Ag Nonprofits

Joe Ricker of Wilkinson, Ind., is an Army veteran, farmer and founder of two nonprofits (At Ease Orchard and Veterans IN Farming) that help veterans like him build a future in agriculture. Both organizations aim to equip veterans with the tools, training and support needed to succeed in agriculture.

Ricker's personal journey in agriculture began after 30 years of Army service, including deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, which left him craving a peaceful life. After moving to Indiana, he took beekeeping classes and received a specialty crop grant. He soon purchased 10 acres in Indiana to raise goats, bees and chickens, along with a high tunnel and an apple orchard.

"At Ease Orchard started as a for-profit farm in about 2017," says Ricker. "After a year or two, I decided I wanted to give back to the Veteran Community. This began as a USDA Spec Crop grant to help with getting Indiana veterans into beekeeping. Ideas and opportunities grew to include the award of the Indiana State Fair Featured Farm and relationships with partners like

the National AgrAbility Project."

Likewise, Veterans IN Farming (IN for Indiana) offers free membership, providing members with access to exclusive workshops, coaching, conferences and networking opportunities.

"Vets IN Farming is a similar story, but it grew out of a need in Indiana for educating veterans in agriculture," Ricker says.

Despite its name, membership is open to military veterans from any state. It includes longtime farmers, working producers, beginning farmers, homesteaders, gardeners and veterans exploring agriculture for the first time. The organization partners with three farms to offer classes on topics ranging from soil health to beekeeping.

Veterans IN Farming specializes in a specific Midwest context, though membership is open to participants from anywhere. At Ease Orchard, in contrast, is a national program that's eligible for and has received grants such as the USDA 2051 Grant, which supports the American VetFarm Network.

Operating two agriculture-based nonprofits is not for the single-minded.

"Behind-the-scenes work is the most

challenging," says Ricker. "When I first started, I just wanted to farm. But a great program requires a balance of resources, time and effort, and business functions. I get less tractor time these days and too much computer time. It's a tough balance."

Ricker advises beginning farmers, whether veteran or otherwise, to start small. He believes a couple of cows is a better investment than 50 cows, and it's always best to ensure early on that there's a market for what you're growing. Likewise, a willingness to experiment and accept failure will go a long way.

"I find success with approximately 5 out of 10 projects I take on," he says.

Still, the drive to continuously improve endures.

"It's most rewarding to see veterans engaged in either selling or supporting their community with food. That usually improves mental health and family life after service, and it 'grows' from there. We like to meet the veteran where they are. Some do great with podcasts; others with phone calls, etc. Each has a different goal, whether it's a large cattle ranch, urban farm, flowers, bees and more.



After moving to Indiana, Ricker took beekeeping classes and received a specialty crop grant.

We want to engage veterans individually as much as possible and get them to the next level and 'Grow Veteran Farmers.'"

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, At Ease Orchards, Veterans IN Farming (ph 262-388-1261; joericker@ateaseorchard.com; www.ateaseorchard.org; <https://vetsinfarming.wildapricot.org>).