

Ford Meter Box Customer Service

Have a question regarding an order, product or shipment? Our friendly Customer Service team is here to help! Available from 7:30am-4:30pm EST each weekday, our factory-trained staff is ready to answer your call or email. For immediate assistance, please contact the factory at (260) 563-3171 or reach out directly to the representative assigned to your area. We are committed to providing the highest level of customer service and look forward to hearing from you!

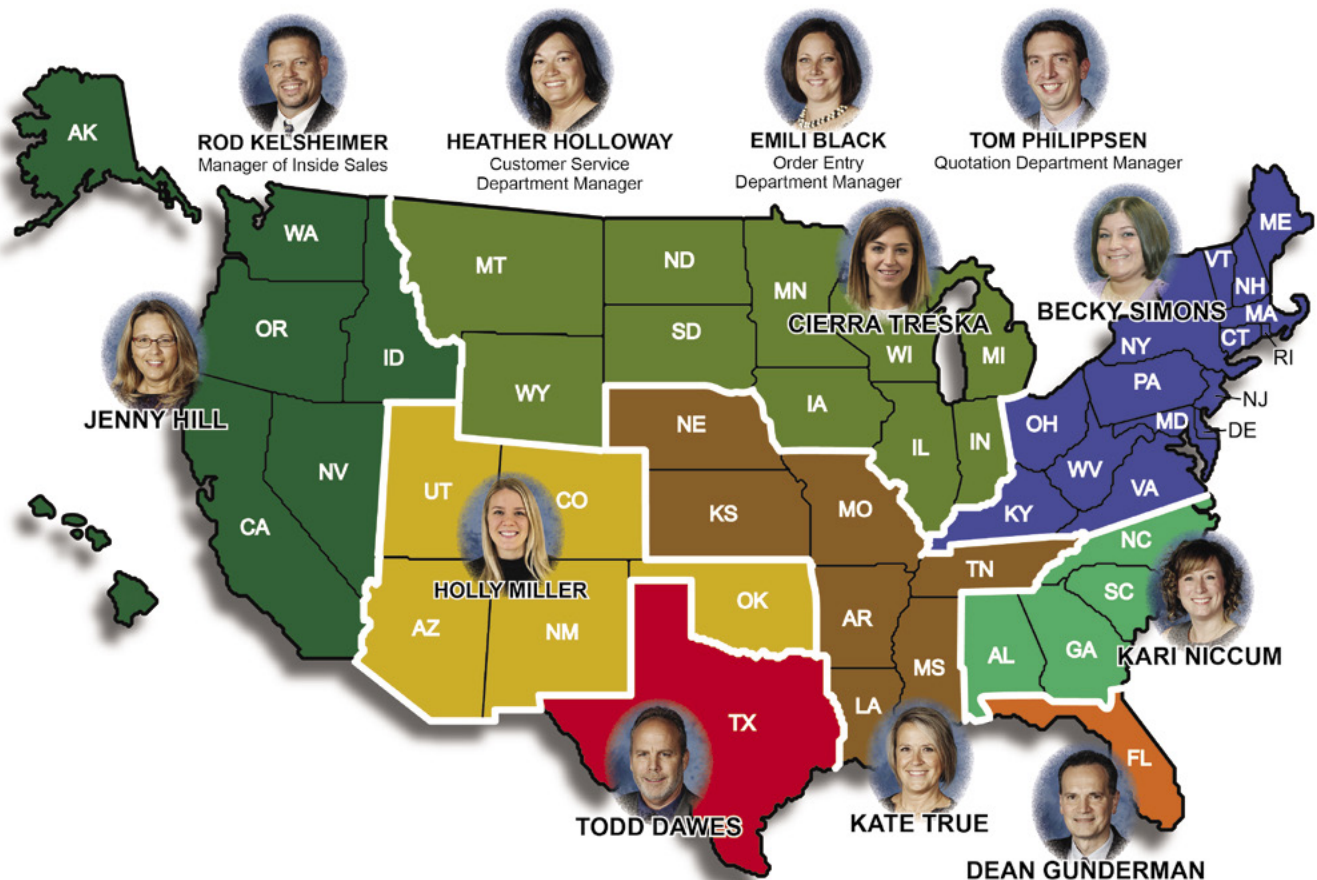
Hours 7:30am - 11:00am and 12:00pm - 4:30pm ET

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Purchase order e-mail: orders@fordmeterbox.com / Quote request e-mail: quotes@fordmeterbox.com



The Ford Meter Box Company, Inc., P.O. Box 443, Wabash, Indiana, USA 46992-0443

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Do You Get Tired of Posing, Sara?
Acrylic on canvas by Mary Lu Pulley

April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MARCH 2021 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		MAY 2021 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31				
		New Moon First Quarter Full Moon Last Quarter				
				April Fool's Day	Good Friday	
 Easter Sunday						
ANZAC Day (Australia & New Zealand)			National Day of Mourning (Canada)			

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A.C. Gilbert's Famous Toys

Albert Carlton Gilbert's varied talents could have been pathways to any of several careers. In his early years he stunned professional magicians with his proficiency in matching them in many of their slight-of-hand tricks. He was a skilled athlete in high school and college, and he shared a gold medal in the pole vault in the 1908 Olympics. He earned a degree in medicine from Yale and hoped to promote physical education for all. But Gilbert's fortune along with a measure of fame came as an inventor and manufacturer of toys.

Gilbert, who was born in 1884 in Salem, Oregon, starred on Yale's track team and briefly held the world record for the pole vault. While he was still a college student, he and a friend founded the Mysto Manufacturing Company which produced props and instructions for performing simple tricks for amateur magicians. After Gilbert split with his business partner, he renamed the firm the A.C. Gilbert Company.

In 1911, Gilbert saw a construction crew erecting a framework of girders along a railroad. From that experience came his idea of designing metal pieces resembling miniature girders with which children could build things.

Two years later Gilbert was ready to market the first Erector set, the most successful of a long line of toys that he would invent and produce. Over the next 30 years the A.C. Gilbert Company sold an average of one million erector sets annually.

Through the years, Gilbert designed several variations of the Erector set. He added an electric motor to power different objects made with the sets. One of the most popular was a toy based upon the iconic Coney Island parachute jump. Gilbert's version stood over three-feet tall, as did a working Ferris wheel. Electric motors powered both. Eventually came a walking robot and a working carousel.

A product that was equally as well-known as the Erector set was A. C. Gilbert's chemistry set. With an impressive array of test tubes and bottles of chemicals certain to fascinate any young person who dreamed of becoming a chemist, the firm's sets became one of the most popular items in A.C. Gilbert's catalog. As he had done with the Erector set, Gilbert soon marketed larger and larger versions of the original set.

In 1938, the firm expanded its list of products when it bought the American Flyer line of electric trains. Even though American Flyer trains were more realistic than those of other brands, the Gilbert Company was never able to successfully meet competition from Lionel.

From the company's beginning, Gilbert's goal was to design toys that would stimulate a youngster's creativity and curiosity. In 1950, he may have overstepped with what he called the U-238 Atomic Energy Lab, a boxed set that came with four samples of uranium ore. In the box was a Geiger counter which ticked away when near the samples of ore.

Even though the instructions that came with the "lab" attempted to assure users and their parents that the set was safe, it still drew criticism. The firm lost money on that product.

The company fell on hard times after the death of its founder in 1961, and it closed in 1967. Today, people of a certain vintage look back with fondness on A.C. Gilbert toys they found years ago under a Christmas tree or wrapped as birthday presents.

by Pete Jones



Image Credit: Library of Congress - Evening Star. November 21st, 1915. Image 36 and Evening Star. November 28th, 1915. Image 55

Please send questions or comments to Pete Jones at peteinwabash@gmail.com