

Y2K TIME MACHINES

Men have dreamed for ages about the fabled "Time Machine" that will allow humans to travel back and forth through time. It occurs to me that the computer industry has accidentally stumbled upon a way of traveling into history.

Yes, it is possible we will all be transported to the year 1900 or perhaps even earlier at one second after midnight on December 31, 1999. Our universe may experience mass confusion instead of mass transportation throughout the time zones, and instead of celebrating man's conquest over time, we may instead be totally frustrated with the inability to move people or products from one destination to another.

I am sure you know by now I'm speaking of the latest potential disaster that is occupying the time and attention of the best hardware and software minds in the country. The consequences of having a computer that all of a sudden believes it is 1900 instead of 2000 is mind boggling, and no one wants to experience the reality of that possibility. The Ford Meter Box Company is included in that scenario, and we want you to know we are doing everything possible to ensure an orderly transfer into the year 2000. Rest assured, we have dedicated the necessary resources to continue delivering water works brass and pipe products to your warehouse or job site.

The truth of the matter is, we have had a team in place for several months whose goal is to ensure that The Ford Meter Box Company will not be shut down because of a year 2000 computer glitch. Every in-house computer, every automatic timer, and every numerically controlled machine has been evaluated to determine what time codes were used in the original design, and consequently what we can expect to happen at the start of the next century.

Our current plan is to have date-sensitive pieces of equipment converted by the end of 1998. It is a challenge because so much modern machinery, whether used in the office or on the factory floor, is computer controlled. The sheer number of machines and systems relying on computer chips makes Y2K detective work time consuming. Customized software presents its own challenges as well, requiring line-by-line

attention when off the shelf fixes aren't available.

Chances are likely that your organization is undergoing the same process to offer uninterrupted service to your customers. We wish you success and promise to do everything we can to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Let's hope that none of our computers turn into time machines and send us roaring back into history. Time machine travel can willingly be saved for another era.

by Tom Hodson, Sr. Vice President, Marketing and Sales

