Sandretto builds largest molding machine

An 8,800-ton hydraulic plastic injection molding machine is setting new records. The new Model 9000 machine being built by Sandretto, Turin, Italy, is the largest of its type ever built. It will measure 82 feet long and 56 feet high.

Sandretto Plastics Machinery, Inc. is the North American subsidiary of Sandretto Industrie S.p.A. of Turin, Italy, one of the world's largest manufacturers of plastics injection molding machines. Sandretto Plastics Machinery, Inc. is headquartered in Farmington Hills.

The new unit features a vertical clamp with hydraulic control that rises between two injectors on opposite sides. It will be used to produce industrial containers. The polyethylene containers will be used by the automotive industry.

This injection molding machine can form plastic by compression for new industrial applications, primarily for the automotive industry.

Components of this machine are huge. It will be assembled on site in a pit 11 ½ feet deep.

EACH INJECTION unit can operate independently, allowing coinjection of different plastic material. Together they can inject 209 pounds of plastic material per cycle.

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The machine will accommodate different molds, and will be equipped for quick mold change. Due to the size of the molds, they will be moved on rails between the mold storage area and the machine. Sandretto is coordinating the mold project. The mold is being built in Italy.

A Sandretto robot will be used for parts handling.

This huge machine features lots of automation. A control similar to the control units usually provided with Sandretto's other injection molding machines is used to direct the entire operation. The control will be modified to give flexibility whether the machine is operating in a single injection, dual injection or compression mode.

It will have taken one year for the special steel platens to be cast, stabilized and finished.

It will require about six months to assemble, set up and test the machine. In an unusual move, all of that activity will take place at the customer's site. That is necessary both for logistical and economic reasons.

THE CUSTOMER built its new factory with the 8,800 system in mind. The machine is due to be completely installed by early summer. Production is scheduled to start in late 1990.

The customer forecasts that the machine will operate on a three-shift basis, with three workers manning each shift. Its first months of operation will be devoted to molding the containers. Then other items will be produced using two molds simultaneously.

The machine also will be used by Sandretto and its customer for research and development of large parts, especially for automotive use.

Seniors can take driving refresher

Farmington-area senior citizens can participate in a workshop designed to help them improve their driving skills, increase their confidence and maintain their driving mobility.

It may even qualify them for multi-year discounts on their automobile insurance premiums.

The two-day workshop will be held at Farmington Community School, 30415 Shiawassee (between Orchard Lake Road and Middlebelt, south of 10 Mile Road), on Sept. 28-29, between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

The workshop is sponsored by the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) of Oakland County, under a federal grant received through the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

The workshop features "55 Alive/Mature Driving," the first comprehensive driver retraining course geared to the specific needs of older motorists.

Developed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the course covers the effects of aging and medications on driving, strategies for compensating, updated traffic rules, defensive driving, coping with today's traffic volumes, energy saving and accident prevention measures.

PARTICIPANTS CAN measure their brake reaction time, visual acuity, peripheral vision, depth perception, ability to recover from glare for night driving, and other elements important to safe driving.

They may also take part in a driving exercise which allows them to drive their own vehicles with an instructor present. The instructor will point out possible problem areas in driving behavior and suggest strategies for improvement.

No records of scores are maintained, and results have no bearing on a driver's license. The goal of the workshop is simply to help older drivers continue to drive for as long and safely as possible.

More than 500 Oakland County seniors have already participated in the workshop, which is regarded as a national pilot program. It is the only driver retraining program for seniors in the United States which includes psychological and physical testing and actual behind-the-wheel assessment.

Persons 50 years of age and older are eligible to participate. The workshop fee is $7. Participants are invited to bring a "brown-bag" lunch.

To register, send a check or money order made payable to AARP, along with your name, address and telephone number, to the Traffic Improvment Association of Oakland County, 2510 South Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills 48013.

For information, call TIA at 334-4971.

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