



CERTIFIED BY



Cover Story

# ALUMI-NATION



Always striving to improve our products...  
Bill's Bulletin, Page 2

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## Alumi-Guard Goes Platinum

DuPont Coating Solutions Certifies Alumi-Guard, Inc. as an Alesta Platinum Certified Architectural Applicator

DuPont Coating Solutions recently certified Alumi-Guard Inc. as an Alesta Platinum Certified Architectural Applicator. This certification allows Alumi-Guard to apply Alesta AR500 Fluoropolymer architectural coatings on aluminum profiles at its Brooksville facility.

Alumi-Guard has demonstrated that the appropriate process and quality systems are in place to achieve the highest level of certification available to architectural applicators. Recent testing completed at Alumi-Guard and DuPont has confirmed compliance to AAMA 2605 requirements.

### BACKGROUND

DuPont Coating solutions is a significant supplier of architectural powder coatings in Europe and Asia Pacific with over 35 years



Photo: Alumi-Guard

of market experience. The DuPont Alesta AP brand of powders is the most widely sold brand in Europe and is approved through Qualicoat and GSB. The European Architectural market converted to powder over 20 years ago and now accounts for over 90% of all architectural finishes. In the Americas, approximately 10% of architectural products are coated in powder. With increased environmental awareness and the push to sustainable building practices, powder is now being viewed as an alternative to liquid architectural systems. *(continued on page 3)*

## Gun Upgrade Reduces Powder Usage, Improves Yield

A Case Study Featuring Alumi-Guard by the Powder Coating Institute

Edited By Sharon Spielman



Fall Issue of Powder Coated Tough Magazine  
Photo courtesy PCI

*When this Florida-based fence and railing maker needed a more reliable powder coating application system, they turned to ITW Gema.*

At the end of 2008, when Alumi-Guard Inc., a manufacturer of quality aluminum fence and railing products, wanted to upgrade its powder coating system for one that would provide a more reliable coating application, they weighed their options and decided to install an ITW Gema application system. Alumi-Guard, a company that has earned a reputation as an industry leader through innovation, expert craftsmanship and unsurpassed customer service, continuously looks for new ways to improve quality, reduce costs, and become more environmentally friendly, according to Charles Howison, the company's chief operating officer. They needed a system that also would improve yield, reduce reject costs, spare parts usage, and powder consumption. *(continued on page 2)*

## Gun Upgrade Reduces Powder Usage...continued from page 1

Photo: Alumi-Guard



Alumi-Guard Inc. in Brooksville, Fla., is a company that has earned a reputation as an industry leader through innovation, expert craftsmanship and unsurpassed customer service by continuously looking for new ways to improve quality, reduce costs, and become more environmentally friendly. Photo: Alumi-Guard

Alumi-Guard operates out of a 200,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility in Brooksville, Fla., and has a distribution facility in Scranton, Pa., as well, to provide quick delivery of products to the Northeast and upper Midwest.

For their upgrade, Alumi-Guard decided to change equipment suppliers and work with ITW Gema and the distributor, Dietz Supply Co., Huntley, Ill.

Howison says they chose OptiGun® automatic powder guns, OptiStar® control units, ITW Gema reciprocators, and OptiFlex® manual wall units. An OptiControl® system was purchased to increase consistency and reduce costs.



Photo: Alumi-Guard

Gonzalez-Lopez adjusting a setting on Gema's Opticontrol PC based control system.

Enough time has passed for the company to see the results of its upgrade. Alumi-Guard has reduced powder and spare parts usage, reduced reject costs, and the company now has a more consistent and reliable high quality finish. "With our previous equipment, 3.3 percent of total cost as a percent of sales was spent on powder," says Howison. "We have reduced powder usage to 2.3 percent with our new equipment." Alumi-Guard was able to meet all of its goals for a powder coating system upgrade; they now have a system in place that will reduce cost and improve quality.

### Did You Know...

that Alumi-Guard is only one of two companies awarded with DuPont's prestigious Platinum Certification?

Image: DuPont®



**H**ere at Alumi-Guard we are always striving to improve our product quality and services. Of all the factors that go into making a quality aluminum fence none are more important than the finish. This is what the homeowners notice the most and often times it can make or break a sale.

That's why we acquired our DuPont certification, so you can let your customers know that they are buying the best finish in the industry. Our powder coating process was put through rigorous testing and analysis to become one of only two manufacturers in America to receive this honor.

We hope this will give you an edge in an increasingly competitive market.

Happy fencing!

Sincerely,  
Bill Woodard

*If you are interested in additional information regarding any of our products and services - or if you have any questions or comments you would like to share with us, please contact our customer service department at 877-258-6448.*

### About Alumi-Guard

Alumi-Guard is a privately owned company, incorporated in 2000 by owner Bill Woodard. They provide a large selection of maintenance-free, powder coated aluminum fences, gates and arbors. Products are available in a variety of styles, colors and heights to meet any customer requirement. Alumi-Guard has recently worked through the process to receive DuPont™ AR400 and AR500 certification, a regarded certification in the architectural industry. Alumi-Guard also is considering becoming PCI certified, Howison says.

Alumi-Guard's washer and oven from Alabama Washer & Oven Co., were installed in 2006. "Pretreatment is critical to the process," Howison says, so the company uses a three-stage pretreatment process. "We use Bulk Clean and Eclipse from Bulk Chemicals and we are very pleased with our pretreatment. We monitor that process throughout the day," he adds.

Alumi-Guard runs its line at approximately 14 fpm. Parts are cured in their gas convection oven at 425°F for 20 min.

## The Challenge

Alumi-Guard continuously reviews all aspects of its manufacturing in order to improve product quality and reduce cost, Howison says. The company found that upgrading its powder coating system was one component that would make a substantial impact in achieving this goal.

Alumi-Guard's goals for the upgrade included:

- Achieve a more consistent and reliable coating process.
- Improve yield, while reducing reject costs.
- Reduce spare parts usage.
- Reduce powder consumption.

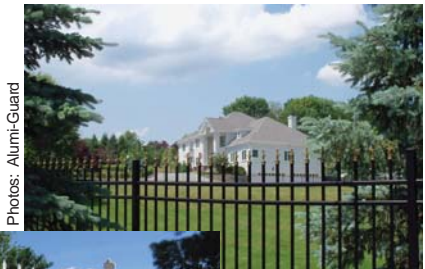
Alumi-Guard selected 16 OptiGun automatic powder guns, OptiStar control units, OptiFlow® powder pumps, and two ITW Gema reciprocators. All of this was integrated with an OptiControl PC-based control system. For touch-up work in hard-to-coat areas, two OptiFlex manual wall units also were installed.

This equipment configuration has provided Alumi-Guard with accurate and repeatable results that have reduced reject rates and powder consumption. Alumi-Guard also purchased four 200 lb. hoppers for their four main colors to reduce set-up time between color changes.

"ITW Gema's service and technical support personnel have been fantastic and we have received outstanding service from our ITW Gema distributor, Dietz Supply Company," Howison says. "The changes from our upgrade have been very significant."

As a result of their powder coating system upgrade, Alumi-Guard managed to meet all of their goals in the following areas:

- Achieved a more consistent and reliable coating process.
- Improved yield, while reducing rejects by 25%.
- Reduced spare parts usage by 87%.
- Reduced powder cost from 3.3% as a percent of sales to 2.3%.



Photos: Alumi-Guard



## Future Outlook

Alumi-Guard's upgrade has provided them with a more consistent and high quality finish, which in turn has reduced costs and allowed them to offer better lead times to their customers. "By selecting ITW Gema powder coating equipment, we met all of our goals for our system upgrade and we now have a totally reliable system," says Howison. "We estimated ROI on this upgrade at one year, and we achieved that." Alumi-Guard's mission to provide the highest quality products and service beyond expectation to their customers is recognized through the company's continuous manufacturing process improvements and the dedication of their employees to push the limits of excellence.

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### Alumi-Guard Goes Platinum...continued from page 1

Globally, high-end commercial and residential markets now commonly specify the use of fluoropolymers to meet the increased requirements for long-term durability. In the last five to ten years there has been tremendous growth in the use of fluoropolymer-based coatings in the architectural market. While fluoropolymer technologies are considerably more expensive to apply than more conventional coating systems, they provide substantially improved color and gloss retention properties. Additional benefits include reduced long-term maintenance and replacement costs for asset owners.

For many years, Kynar has been the most commonly specified liquid system for AAMA 2605 applications until recently. While having outstanding exterior performance properties, Kynar based systems have disadvantages including the need to prime and soft films which increases the possibility of damage along with high application costs.

*For more information regarding Alumi-Guard's Platinum Certification by DuPont®, please contact us at 877-258-6448*

DuPont Coating solutions is responding to this market need with DuPont Alesta AR500 Fluoropolymer designed for the architectural applications. DuPont Alesta AR500 Fluoropolymer meets the requirements of AAMA 2605 and is available in a variety of colors and gloss ranges. This product provides an eco friendly alternative to conventional VOC producing liquid based Kynar systems.

### CERTIFIED APPLICATORS

Aluminum extruders and manufactures can be certified to apply the Alesta AR500 Fluoropolymer and offer associated warranties. In order to become certified, the applicator must meet a stringent set of requirements which includes passing a detailed facility audit. The audit includes process documentation and a quality system review. The test phase takes approximately 6 months to complete due to the length of some specified tests. Once satisfied that the requirements of AAMA 2605 have been met, only then will DuPont award certification as an Alesta Platinum Architectural Powder Applicator.



## Alumi-Guard Community News

*Leadership Hernando Class of 2010 Visits Alumi-Guard for Business Development Day*



Leadership Hernando is a county program that started back in 1991. This program is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce to encourage, develop and provide leadership for the community.

*To identify and educate potential, emerging and existing community leaders*

*To promote networking among membership*

*To identify community needs and to promote/facilitate community projects*

*To provide a resource pool for the benefit of the community*

This year's Leadership class has (26) participants who will spend (2) full days a month for 5 months learning all aspects of the community. On Thursday 09/16 the class of 2010 went to the Industrial Park in Hernando County to visit (3) separate businesses for Business Development Day.

Keane Chapman and Chip Howison conduct a presentation for class participants (top). Chip Howison answers questions regarding Cantilever Gates (middle). Keane Chapman demonstrates the differences in product grades (bottom). Photo: Alumi-Guard

Alumi-Guard was one of three businesses selected to host the class of 2010. Below are some of the comments from the class participants:

*"Very intense day but very enjoyable"*

*"Accuform and Alumi-Guard were awesome"*

*"I was amazed at the businesses we saw"*

*"Tour of the Industrial business part was great"*

*"I really thought the staff incentive was inspiring. It shows we have some really great businesses in this county"*

Alumi-Guard did a wonderful job promoting business development day and plans to host the class of 2011.

## Employee News & Events

### *Congratulations to Dave King!!!*

Alumi-Guard recently celebrated Dave King's 10th anniversary with the company. Dave was hired August 25, 2000.

When Dave began with Alumi-Guard, the company was located on Eden Avenue in Hudson, FL. The facility was approximately 2,300 square and employed 10 people; to give prospective to this, today, our facility is 200,000 square feet and we have 83 full-time employees as well as approximately 30 temporary employees.

Dave has worked in various departments; he has built panels (back when we hand-routed holes in the posts) and gates, and has been a machine operator as well as a crane operator. He currently is a Lead in the Post Department/Material Handling.

***We appreciate all of Dave's hard work and congratulate him on his 10 years of service!***



Chip Howison, Dave King and John Holcomb Photo: Alumi-Guard

