




## COMPANY PROFILE

# AFC-Holcroft

AFC-Holcroft celebrates 100 years as the U.S. market leader in the production of industrial furnace equipment for ferrous and nonferrous metals.

*By Molly J. Rogers*





Now part of AICHELIN Group, AFC-Holcroft looks forward to combining its long-standing traditions with an innovative future to continue providing heat treating solutions to its customers worldwide.

**AFC-HOLCROFT BEGAN BUILDING FURNACES** in 1916 when Holcroft and Company was founded in Detroit, Michigan, by Charles T. Holcroft, supplying equipment to the fledgling automotive industry in its earliest days. Although today it uses modern design software and technology, the company continues to maintain its original drawings, many hand-drawn and some dating as far back as the 1900s, in order to provide parts and service to customers with equipment of any age.

In 1962, Atmosphere Furnace Company (AFC) was formed by Robert Keough. AFC acquired Holcroft in 1999 and then renamed the company AFC-Holcroft. In July 2016, AFC-Holcroft was purchased by Aichelin Group, headquartered in Austria, whose own roots date back to 1868. Aichelin Group — with manufacturing companies Aichelin, EMA Indutec, SAFED, BOSIO, and Noxmat — is a leading provider of industrial furnaces, induction hardening equipment, and industrial gas burner systems. With the recent acquisition, Aichelin Group plans to strengthen its overall market position as one of the leading global heat treatment groups and is now the largest provider of atmosphere furnaces worldwide with 1,100 employees.

Through the combined network of Aichelin Group and AFC-Holcroft, customers will have access to a larger product selection as well as the latest technologies and innovations. The entire group looks forward to the joint growth opportunities and sustainable profitability for their customers, stakeholders, and employees.

AFC-Holcroft has about 100 employees at its facility in Wixom, Michigan, its headquarters for engineering as well as manufacturing heat treatment equipment including universal batch quench (UBQ) and universal batch quench austemper (UBQA) furnaces, pusher furnaces for high-volume processing, rotary and roller hearth furnaces, and single-layer systems for large loads.

One of the company's most celebrated products is the UBQ system, known globally for consistent, repeatable metallurgical results in a compact, modular design. Whether a standalone unit or fully automated cell integrated with companion equipment, the UBQ offers flexible production capability and a wide range of metallurgical processes.

"We are also the recognized technology leader in furnaces with salt quench systems," said Tracy Dougherty, the sales manager at AFC-Holcroft. "UBQA furnaces are used for the processing of larger parts, while mesh belt furnaces are utilized for smaller parts such as stampings and fasteners. With either design, salt quench processes are performed under a protective atmosphere for increased safety and better results."

Serving markets such as automotive, fasteners, commercial heat treat shops, bearings, gears, earthmoving, agricultural, and mining, among others, AFC-Holcroft provides a complete turnkey service to its customers — beginning with standard or custom-designed equipment, fabrication, and installation and continuing through its entire life cycle including upgrades, retrofits, moving/relocations, and spare parts.

With additional offices in Switzerland and China and a network of global partners, AFC-Holcroft's worldwide geographic reach will be further strengthened as a part of Aichelin Group.

"We have an unmatched reputation for quality and reliability, and we are one of the most trusted names in the industry," said Dougherty. "We work with our customers from the initial inception of their project through the implementation and after production begins. We are known to provide the highest level of service to our customers throughout the sales, implementation, and production utilization of our equipment."

According to Dougherty, AFC-Holcroft makes its customers' needs a top priority and listens to their challenges.



“Today’s customers understand much more about what their desired outcomes may be and want a company who will propose solutions that meet their needs, not rely upon what they have done in the past,” said Dougherty.

While AFC-Holcroft is best known for providing equipment for the processing of steel components, the company recently announced that a Tier 1 automotive supplier located in the Midwest placed two orders with AFC-Holcroft for the supply of heat treating equipment related to the processing of aluminum. The first order consisted of a roller hearth homogenizing furnace for processing aluminum products. The system includes a multi-position loading table, a multi-position furnace, cooling station, and multipurpose unload table. The second order is for a solution heat-treat line that includes charge and discharge transfer cars, a multi-position solution furnace, water quench system, multi-position age furnace, multi-position accumulation charge and discharge tables, accumulation crossover mechanism, and a tray pullout station.

AFC-Holcroft’s offerings also include its Remote Diagnostics™ Service during the furnace warranty period, which allows the company to use data to help target and resolve operational inefficiencies that a customer may be experiencing and, in many cases, recommend corrective actions. The service eliminates human time and cost associated with manually gathering historical data for the same purpose.



“We also use technology through the use of computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modeling to prove out our designs during the concept phase,” said Dougherty. “We continue to evolve and improve our products and services by using data collected by the IIoT (Industrial Internet of Things).”

AFC-Holcroft is a member of the Metal Treating Institute (MTI), Industrial Heat Treating Equipment Association (IHEA), ASM International, ASM Heat Treat Society, and the Association of Water Technologies (AWT). Additionally, the company is ISO 9001:2008 certified and offers ongoing training to its employees.

AFC-Holcroft will be exhibiting at Furnaces North America (FNA) on October 4-5, in Nashville, Tennessee, Booth #208-210. 🔥

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