



STAFDA Manufacturer Liaison Committee

Professional Contractor Hand Tool Market Report

Greg Helbling, Wright Tool Co.

Overall Perspective in the Hand Tool Industry

Wright Tool has been providing US Made high quality hand tools to the industrial and construction markets for over 80 years.

This past year has been very challenging to say the least for the hand tool marketplace. Budgetary constraints and the lack of funding for industrial and construction jobs, has much the industry in survival mode. Most distributors have bled their inventory levels down and are now only purchasing for demand, which is still not at a growth level.

Other aspects in the industry such as export business, is showing modest growth. While import products, (from anywhere), are becoming more accepted, the value of a product that is "Made in USA" still carries weight as long as manufacturers promote and emphasize its worth. As an industry, we need to educate the younger generations to realize the overall benefits of purchasing US made products.

The outlook for 2010, is slightly better than 2009. Delayed job starts and planned maintenance can only be ignored for so long. As the recession progresses, everything we rely on gets another day older and without maintenance, another day closer to critically dangerous operations. This reminds me of an old oil filter commercial's tag line, "You can pay me now or pay me later, but, sooner or later you're going to have to pay me". By spring of 2010, we expect to begin to see some significant movement in this area. Whatever your political stance may be, the reality is that the current regime cannot achieve their goals without some sort of economic prosperity.