

HOT SHOTS & COOL NOTES

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What are you doing about rising costs?

Although attendance by American bakers was low, Europain was packed with bakers from around the world looking for state-of-the-art automation solutions. Flour and ingredient price hikes are hitting globally and bakeries are searching for cost savings. Equipment is their target. Here in the U.S. many bakers still are torn between the identity as an "artisan" baker and the relationship to automation (read Michael's article on page 2).

The fact is automation *has come a long way, baby*, and technology today is designed to handle high hydration dough with long bulk fermentation times. It also requires that the people running the equipment have an advanced level of understanding of dough and how every step of the bread-making process affects quality.

Today's automation doesn't translate to mindless work of feeding a machine. Automation is a tool that relieves bakers of the repetitive work and allows the master baker to concentrate more fully on quality starting with the mix and ending with the bake. Those years spent on the bench handling dough are what give the automated shop the upper hand.

No longer is the emphasis on pounding out dough balls to meet the clock and/or take up the slack of a no-show. Instead automation allows the master baker an opportunity to

truly step into his or her craft and be competitive in today's more complex world. Much like a conductor whose job is to shape a musical interpretation, the master baker with the help of automation orchestrates the steps of and people involved in the bread-making process to produce a masterpiece.

Times have changed in our industry and our language needs to evolve with it. Identity is wrapped in psychology. Producing a high quality product consistently is the essence of the matter. Can you do that while being mindful of your employees' physical welfare and maintain costs to be competitive?

Enjoy the read.



Patricia Kennedy,
President
Kemper Bakery Systems



WP BAKERYGROUP

ME Am I an Artisan Baker?

I am currently writing this article while an interesting debate carries on in the Bread Bakers Guild of America's chat room, an online group of bread bakers that openly shares their ideas and offers help to those in need. I am supposed to be writing about the bakeries I saw in Europe on my recent visit, but I feel it can wait until the next issue of the newsletter because I want to talk about bakeries here in America first.

The thread on the chat room pertains to automation in the bakery and currently the debate is at what point do those who use automation stop being an "artisan baker." This is a pretty intriguing topic for someone like me as I grew up in a small hand shop making everything from scratch and I continued working in small to medium size bakeries all over North America up until I began working with Kemper Bakery Systems. I feel that I have been on both sides of the fence of this debate and I would like to comment openly about it.

Managing a large artisan bakery

In early 2001 I was working as a production manager for a large artisan bakery in the Northwest where we produced around 8,000-10,000 lbs of bread per day. At this particular bakery we did not have removable mixing bowls and

bowl lifts, bread and roll lines, or state-of-the-art oven loaders. We did have a couple of bread molders from the 1950s and a hydraulic dough divider that we preferred not to use, if possible. For our oven loader we had a simple scissor lift in front of the steam tube oven along with four or five rack ovens. As you can imagine, all of the lifting and transporting had to be done manually and with all of that moving and shuffling to be done throughout the day, we had to have a fair amount of labor to do so.

Production issues

We needed strong young men to bend over the two fixed-bowl mixers and pull out thousands of pounds of dough during their shift and weigh it into dough tubs and then stack them in the corner. We needed people to bend over the dough tubs a few times to fold the dough and restack the tubs.

When it came to dividing we cut a lot of dough by hand on a balance scale if it was our premium bread line, and if it was standard grocery store fare then we would cut it in the hydraulic divider. Since I believe in preshaping dough before the final moulding occurs, we had a group of people around a large bench putting two pieces of dough together and then rounding them into a ball. From there the dough would be placed on

floured boards, set onto racks and covered. As with most bakeries, the temperature would fluctuate during the different seasons, so the amount of time the dough rested would vary depending on the time of year.

I always tried to be very meticulous when it came to production scheduling. I always had a schedule that showed where the dough was supposed to be at any given time. When things went well the schedule was right on; when we were thrown curve balls, the schedule would go right out the window. For example, if a couple of employees called in on the same shift and no replacements could be found, we would experience a huge dip in efficiency in the shaping area. The shaping area was always the one spot that got shorted employees. That's because you have to have a mixer and a baker, but you can still function, although much slower, with three shapers instead of five. This one little wrinkle in production would be the difference between perfect bread and good bread for that day.

Another problem in my production schedule was the fact that not everyone would work at the same speed everyday. Many of my employees performed differently on different days. Some days they would kick-butt and amaze me and other days they were still pretty hungover from the night before and wanted to leave early. This also affected the production schedule and very much affected the quality of the finished product. **All of these fluctuations in the schedule meant that the dough followed the timing and pulse of the bakery and not its own predictable course.** One day the levain

would rest on the boards for 20 minutes and the next day it might rest for 28 minutes or worse, it might sit there for 45 minutes because we were too backed up to get to it. This alone was a huge factor in our daily quality.

The final shaping of the loaves was done by several people and mostly they were done by hand. In the early morning hours during the production of the premium bread line, there would typically be four shapers all hand molding the loaves with every loaf slightly different from the one next to it. That is somewhat romantic if they are all good, but many times, *different* was not good. The varying amounts of tension in each loaf affected the loaves in several ways. The final proofing time could be slightly different from one loaf to the next, which can affect the depth at which the baker needs to score the loaves, and can definitely affect the oven spring and overall quality of the bread. For perfect tender baguettes with 40% of the flour fermented in a 16-hour poolish, this can spell disaster if all of these factors hit you on the same day.

Labor issues

Without getting into too much detail, just stop and consider how much the dough was moved around by people and how much any owner can pay someone to move bread dough around the bakery. This, in itself, is a huge expense and greatly limits the age and health of your employees. You cannot have a brilliant older baker, like my father, who did work until he was 60 years old in a bakery, bent over pulling dough out of a mixer. You have to hire someone young and strong and then

hope you can train him how to mix.

Opening to possibilities

Now that I have a little more experience under my belt and I have had a chance to visit bakeries all over the

My production labor was simple.

I had four or five bakers that were lifelong dedicated bakers that were extremely skilled and I had about 10 – 12 general laborers. The five skilled bakers were constantly training new hires and filling in due to call-ins and were rarely able to put their skills to work fine tuning the bread. They rarely got a chance to stop and focus on the bread and how to make it better. Although the skilled bakers were paid a higher wage they were never paid even close to their worth and knowledge because they didn't get to use it.

world, I am starting to see what possibilities are available to bakeries that might be stuck in a similar pattern.

Many European countries, and especially the German-influenced countries, have had automated bakeries for years. One of the main reasons for this is that rye-based dough is the norm there and this dough is easier to automate than soft wheat dough. Dense rye dough can be divided very quickly after mixing and

it is not expected to have an open interior crumb like many of our favorite wheat-based breads here in the States. This has allowed these countries to move to automation much sooner than countries with mainly wheat-based products. Most of the great artisan bakeries in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland have had a huge head start in learning to calculate ROI (Return on Investment) on equipment purchases and have been able to build their bakeries little by little over time. The result of the different circumstances in these European countries are that they now have some very large, very high quality, state-of-the-art bakeries that we can learn from and use as a blueprint for the baking industry here in America. Now, with equipment that can high hydration and long bulk ferment times, solutions exist for bakers here in America.

Most bakers understand the benefits of using mixers with removable bowls and bowl lifts so I will leave that alone and not state the obvious. However many bakers do not know what else is available beyond the basics. Take for instance ingredient delivery systems. Did you know that there are systems available that will deliver scaled ingredients either to you or to the mixing bowl by touching a computer screen? Not just silo systems, but every ingredient! This means that any skilled baker could run a mixing room and not have to be 24 years old and double as a trainer at Bally's Total Fitness. This also means that the system will greatly reduce errors and assist with time, temperature, ingredient accuracy, and waste.

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Ingredient handling systems popular in European bakeries reduce errors and save time.

New technology shines

In the same chat group that I spoke about earlier Ben Davis from Grand Central Baking Company in Portland, Oregon said "Hand shaping 5000 loaves a day is idiot's work" and I have to agree. This is where new technology shines and where you can find solutions to your biggest labor and quality problems. In my scenario above, we would have 4 -6 bakers hand shaping on busy days at random times and only one or two of them could be considered a master baker and the rest were just "hands." I am not trying to knock the new baker or anyone else for that matter, **I am just saying at some point when do we become the machines and our movements mechanical?**

The bread lines offered by the WP Bakery Group solve a number of problems. First they can divide soft bulk fermented dough better than any hydraulic divider on the market and once divided they have a place to rest the dough so no one is moving the dough around on

racks. The next thing is the dough will rest for exactly the amount of time your baker wants it to; with a skilled baker alongside to guide the dough through the process he can make excellent bread while at the same time you can afford to pay him more because he is actually producing and not babysitting other employees.

Off to the ovens!

Oven loading systems are probably one of the best ways to save labor and increase quality in the bakery. A strong oven can give you the same bake, time after time, and without rotating product and with an oven loader that can handle the softest ciabatta, your quality will improve. I don't care how good of a baker you are, if you are baking thousands of loaves in a shift and if you have to rotate your bread your quality will suffer. Even worse is if you baking differently than the other bakers by venting when you want to vent and steaming different lengths of time than your fel-

low bakers, then you will have consistency problems. It doesn't matter if you are right or not, what matters is if you are baking the same as your colleagues.

High quality ovens and loaders like those offered by the WP Bakery Group allow one skilled baker and possibly one assistant (I do believe in assistants) to run three large deck ovens (and more if proper pre-loading tables are used) without ever rotating the bread and every loaf will be baked exactly as planned. The production manager can monitor oven use and performance from an off-site computer station. Minor changes can be allowed at the oven to account for the slight variances in the bread from day to day.

Making the most of tools

All of these tools begin to make the bread predictable and when it is predictable then your skilled bakers can begin to perfect their movements and improve the quality of the bread. Bakers can achieve this when their focus is balanced between overall production and each individual loaf. When working in this state of awareness, the skilled baker has the ability to improve the quality of a much larger quantity of loaves and be paid properly for his/her contributions as a craftsman and artisan baker.

TIM HEALEA

Building a Bakery

Bakers are a diverse group bonded together by a singular passion. Delve into their histories and you'll find a lawyer, a fisherman, and in Tim Healea's case, a journalist. After three years working as an editor for a trade magazine in the Big Apple, Tim did an about-face. He quit and went to culinary school. Halfway through school, Tim started baking on his own using Nancy Silverton's *Breads from the La Brea Bakery* as his guide. That period marked the end of his career search and the beginning of his story as one of Portland's top bakers.

Tim returned to his childhood roots and began baking at Portland's Pearl Bakery. After a decade of baking at Pearl (most of them as head baker) and collecting several prestigious awards along the way, Tim decided to branch out on his own. Consulting proved lucrative but ultimately Tim missed going to the same place everyday and throwing heart and soul into his work. That missing piece propelled Tim to open his own place, Little T American Baker, a nickname he earned as part of the 2002 Bread Bakers Guild Team USA, which took home the silver medal.

Scheduled to open in June 2008, Little T American Baker is a fusion of rustic pastries and breads typical of a boulangerie branded with an American eye toward design, merchandising and quality. Farm fresh ingredients from the Pacific-Northwest complete the vision.



A WP Matador 125 deck oven is installed in Tim Healea's new bakery, Little T American Baker, located in southeast Portland's Clinton neighborhood. Healea also purchased a Kemper spiral mixer sized to match the oven capacity.

From his Pearl experience, Tim knew that he couldn't rely on bread and pastry sales alone and would need coffee and lunch sales to build his bottom line. The 1,970-square foot bakery will serve homemade soups, freshly made sandwiches and offer a full line of coffees as well as beer and wine. An ideal neighbor, the artisan bakery cafe is on the main floor of a newly built condominium building located in one of Portland's up and coming restaurant districts.

Getting financed

Early on, Tim knew he wanted a retail business not wholesale. He didn't want to get into distribution. "I didn't want to work in the middle of the night," Tim explained. "I want to still

maintain a quality of life and not be a slave to the bakery." He also knew that he didn't want a business partner. While capital infusion is important, Tim wanted to answer to himself and to his customers rather than a partner who had an equity interest. "I wanted to have control on how things were set up," Tim admitted. He explored financing options, talked to banker friends and applied for an SBA loan and for local urban renewal funds. He also created a three-year business plan, hiring an accountant friend to pull together the financial components into a proforma package for the banks. "If you have a solid business plan and can show you have expertise in the

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industry, financing is out there,” Tim said.

Building a bakery

With positive feedback from his business plan and a green light from the banker, Tim put his funds toward hiring an architect to create the space and branding he envisioned and got a bid from a contractor to build out the space. An SBA loan will fund tenant improvements.

To help with a logo, signage for windows, and packaging, Tim hired a local designer. “The next step is to enhance the interior design with things that are cool and on a budget,” Tim stated. The bakery will sport a chalkboard menu behind the counter and will use kraft wrap with string and stamps instead of printed bags.

“I’ve set up a blog instead of spending thousands of dollars on a web site,” Tim added. “It’s more personal and still gives me a web presence.”

Tim’s priorities were clear from the start. “I wanted good quality equipment and the space to look nice,” Tim said, “so that’s where I put my initial investment.”

Oven and mixer: Heart of an artisan bakery

Tim, who had joined Kemper Bakery Systems’ tour of factories and bakeries in Germany and Austria in 2006, had done his homework. “Seeing how the Europeans used the equipment was really helpful. I saw a lot more flexibility using a Matador oven than I might have seen touring bakeries in the United States,” Tim said. “And talking to the engineers in Germany—the people who actually make the ovens—was really helpful,” Tim added.

Tim chose a deck oven for a quality bake for bread. At the same time, he wanted an oven that was flexible and that could make a lot of different products from cakes to Danish to roasted meats.

Those parameters convinced Tim to purchase a cyclothermic deck oven. With the WP Matador, Tim can set two different temperature zones and bake different products, say Danish and bread, at the same time. “That helps me with my

**“I wanted good
quality equipment
and the space to look nice,
so that’s where I put my
initial investment.”**

—Tim Healea

time schedule and I don’t have to get there so early in the morning,” Tim said.

“While the steam tube doesn’t drop in temperature, which is great for bread, it doesn’t have the same amount of mass and flexibility to go lower in temperature like the cyclothermic oven,” Tim explained. “With a cyclothermic oven, I don’t need a rack or convection oven,” Tim added.

Tim attended the 2007 IBIE show in Orlando buying a WP Matador 125, the show model used for the booth’s running bakery. “I wanted to take advantage of the show pricing and there are some great additions on that particular oven,” Tim said, referring to the Navigo, the Matador’s PLC system. “Originally, I was looking at a smaller oven, but this

oven will give me room to grow,” Tim stated. At the show, Tim spent a lot of time talking with WP’s chief field engineer, Bruno Bettolo, who spent nearly 45 years installing and troubleshooting WP ovens. That kind of advice is invaluable, Tim pointed out, who took time to ask about space planning, and electrical and gas requirements, so that his space would be designed properly from the start.

Tim, who has had a lot of experience with Kemper mixers, also purchased a Kemper 75 SP spiral mixer at the show. “They are the workhorses of the industry,” Tim said, who, following the advice of Michael Eggebrecht, bought a mixer sized to the oven so it gives him the flexibility to work with the oven capacity. “Michael is so experienced with the equipment and models and what size fits with what,” Tim said.

Buying an assembled oven saves money in installation, but a 9000 lb oven isn’t as flexible as one that comes in pieces. When his Matador oven was unluckily damaged in shipping from Orlando to Portland, Kemper sent service manager Brad Engelhardt to Portland to inspect the oven. While there, Brad met with Tim’s rigging company to show them how to move, pick up and place the oven properly. “Brad has worked with me and my mechanical contractor extensively in planning the space,” Tim said, grateful for Brad’s knowledge of equipment and helpful demeanor.

The oven, successfully moved in place with the help of 7 men and a 15,000-lb fork lift in March, will be fired up and running well before the May 29th grand opening.

Preventative Maintenance



A friend of mine said it best once about 15 years ago as we were sitting on top of a sand dune looking at the chains on our quads and commenting to each other on how clean our chains were and how long our chains lasted compared to all our friends' bikes.

If you know anything about motorcycles or quads, you're supposed to keep the chain lubed with a sticky spray so it doesn't fly off while the chain spins around.

Well, in the sand this is counterproductive because you don't want gritty sand sticking to your chain and wearing it out prematurely. So, my friend coined the phrase "I maintain my chain with a strict regimen of neglect."

In reality, this is how many of my customers maintain their equipment, some with better results than others. The problem is that many manufacturers' manuals spell out routines that don't always prevent or forewarn of imminent breakdown so bakery owners don't tend to devote man hours to doing them.

Generally, the best form of preventative maintenance is not how to maintain your machines, rather it's knowing how your workforce treats equipment and how they respond to equipment.

Just as a baker should not solely respond to the oven timer, because the

product may need to be checked beforehand to make sure it's not going to burn, an employee needs to respond to any unusual sound a machine makes. Like our children, when something is wrong or about to go wrong, a machine often tells us by sounding or behaving differently. These signs cannot be ignored or downtime is just around the corner.

There are two basics tasks to incorporate into your maintenance and sanitation schedule to prolong the life of equipment. One is **proper cleaning**, emphasis on *proper*. Cleaning equipment with a pressure washer is not proper and will send the machine to its grave in a fraction of its normal life span.

Inspection of wearing items is another important routine. Drive belts are items that can last for years without attention because they are hidden behind covers, but one day they break and the machine stops in the middle of the night when you need to complete bread production.

Owners' manuals often provide a list of wearing items to keep on hand. Inspect these parts routinely and replace them when they start looking bad. Trust me, this is much more desirable to your production schedule than having your bakers replace them in the middle of the night.

Like our children,
when something is wrong
or about to go wrong,
a machine often tells us
by sounding or behaving
differently.

Any Basic Preventative Maintenance Plan Needs to Include the Following Directives:

- 1) respond to — not ignore— unusual noises
- 2) clean equipment properly
- 3) inspect wearing parts routinely



For the past six months I have been working with Alex Dacula, owner of Fritzie's Bake Shop, a Filipino bakery in New Jersey. When a growth in production required automation, Alex called me for help. Here's Alex's story.

In 1996, Alex left the Philippines and joined his wife, who was already working in the U.S. as a nurse. In five short years, Alex had become a successful general contractor building houses in the New Jersey area.

In 2001, a close friend and baker suggested that Alex invest in a bakery. So, with the money he earned as a contractor he purchased and opened Fritzie's Bake Shop in Fairlawn, NJ. The venture turned out to be one of the best decisions he made. In 2006, Alex decided to open a second bakery in Bergenfield, NJ, which proved even more successful with a better market pull and more parking.

"A lot of people like my bread," Alex enthused, as he watched his wholesale business expand beyond New Jersey and into New York, Connecticut, Maryland, parts of Florida, and Virginia.

With the spurt in demand, Alex soon realized he needed to automate production. Labor issues were cropping up with demand exceeding the bakery's hand-made capabilities. Overtime was at an all-time high and the inability to control his workforce was taking its toll.

Alex wanted a German made piece of equipment, because "German made



ABOVE / The new Multimatic in action.

BELOW / Alex Dacula poses proudly with his new Multimatic.



**“People love my bread,
and everyone has to eat!”**

—Alex Dacula

is the best.” Alex also needed equipment that could work with current production and handle future capacity.

“When I called Kemper Bakery Systems,” Alex explained, “Shawna came to my bakery and explained everything. Then she took me to see demos. We were able to shop around and when we asked for more suggestions, Shawna found the Multimatic that fits our needs. She took care of us and that is why I decided to sign right away.”

In March, Kemper Bakery Systems installed the **Multimatic Divider/Rounder** at Bergenfield and provided training. After running the machine, Alex was very pleased, “I love this machine,” he exclaimed.

With the help of his new divider/rounder, Alex has big plans for his Bergenfield bakery. He is converting part of his shop into a deli to cater to all Americans and expanding his wholesale business into more of Florida and into Georgia.

MULTIMATIC S/SG **Dough dividing machine**

Dividing ranges

Model S: 1.2 – 3 oz per piece

Model SG: 1.2 – 5.3 oz per piece

Output: 6 rows, max. 12,000 pph

Indiana Baking Company



Ron Rice of Indiana Baking Company shows off his new President mixer. Hooked to a water meter, the two Kemper spiral mixers handle the one-shift production.

“We only use spiral mixers and our view is that Kemper is the best mixer made,” Ron Rice, owner of Indiana Baking Company in Fort Wayne, explained. He paused a beat and chuckled, adding “even before we could afford one.” These days the 20-year-old specialty wholesale bakery has two Kemper spiral mixers, one 15 years old—and still going strong—and a new **President 150** purchased last year to help with expanding production.

It was his business partner and wife who started the bakery business, owning first a retail shop and then another bakery with a 50-50 focus on retail and wholesale. His wife noticed that no one was making unique breads for restaurants and that epiphany became the impetus for their next spin-off, a specialty wholesale bakery that supplies restaurant chains and bakeries with

assorted breads, rolls and buns.

“We’d ask restaurants what they wanted and told them we’d make it,” Ron said. It’s a competitive edge that allows Indiana Baking Company to get a better premium and rise above the big competition. “We can make a restaurant unique by providing a specialty bread,” Ron explained, adding that customers are unlikely to drop the account because of the uniqueness of the product.

It’s a strategy that has proven profitable for Indiana Baking Company. From a 2000 square foot origin, Indiana Baking Co. has grown to a 10,000 square feet production facility with another 7000 square feet in the works to support production. Ron, who oversees sales, equipment and people, proudly points out that the bakery has grown mainly through cash flow and is debt-free today.



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Cost: \$19,750*	\$668.35	\$536.60	\$459.60
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*Subject to change due to availability.

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STRATEGY • SOLUTIONS • SUCCESS



After years spent building a bakery business to five stores—three retail with no production and two wholesale/retail bakeries—with 40 wholesale accounts and over 30 employees, Todd Andrews sold the business and took a long-deserved break. Kemper Bakery Systems is pleased to introduce Todd Andrews, our newest bakery sales and equipment consultant.

My whole life has revolved around food and my whole career around bread, and yet these last six months as a sales consultant with Kemper Bakery Systems has been an eye-opener for me. The number of bakeries I have visited this year in the U.S. and overseas is staggering. My career as an American artisan baker is vastly similar and yet vastly different than my European counterparts, and it is the *differences* that proved to be the eye-openers.

After I graduated in Hotel and Restaurant Management and completed my Walt Disney World internship, I pursued the passion that my mother instilled in me for healthful bread and opened my own bakery. And after almost a decade of success and hardships, I sold the last two bakeries of the original five locations. I did this so that I could spend some much-needed time with my family and recuperate. My responsibilities as owner made it hard to focus on the bread unless I was there 24/7, so that's what I did.

In Europe your trade and craft is extremely important and none more so than baking. The goal is simply to make a living at making great bread. They see



Todd Andrews (left) joins Patricia Kennedy and Michael Eggebrecht at WP Bakery Group's booth at Europain.

this as a responsibility to themselves, their families, their employees, and the baking craft. And they accomplish this with the perfect blend of man and machine, eliminating much of the repetitive motion and health hazards inherent in our industry. I know that several of my employees and me would be much happier to have never heard the words tendonitis, carpal tunnel, strained back, tennis elbow, baker's elbow, and baker's lung. Contracting baker's lung was a large part of why I loved the idea of Kemper Bakery Systems bringing a packaged, ingredient-handling solution to America

Ingredient Handling Systems

Imagine every ingredient brought dust free to the mixer with exact control of quantity, mixing time and temperature. It's possible to have a cleaner, healthier facility, making perfect dough that turn into perfect loaves of bread consistently and without costly mistakes. **It's not a dream.** I saw this exact system in large bakeries and small family-run Mom 'n Pop bakeries in Europe.

The decision to use the ingredient handling system we are offering becomes fairly easy once you learn the many benefits.

1. **Financial savings** quickly offset the cost with decreases in the overall expense of flour, production, waste, and labor. Who doesn't want a way to lower the cost of flour?
2. **Quality** will be increased since exact amounts of ingredients can be delivered at exactly the right time and temperature.
3. **Consistency** will be easier to control since variances in the dough due to human error and the surrounding environment are eliminated.
4. **Cleanliness** will be greatly improved by removing clutter and the never-ending flour dust, creating a more attractive and cleaner facility.
5. **Employee health** will no longer be adversely affected because of flour inhalation and the constant heavy lifting of flour bags.
6. The **environment** will be helped by reducing (Reduce/Reuse/Recycle) the use of hundreds of thousands of bags each year and increasing the efficiency of flour deliveries.
7. **Space** will be recaptured and/or organized by removing flour bags, empty bags, and pallets.

Feel free to contact me about this system. I am excited about the work we are doing with so many great artisan bakeries and am looking forward to bringing new solutions to many more.

Todd Andrews 509-281-1621 (cell)