

Engineering, Sales &
Manufacturing
129 Battleground Rd.
Kings Mountain, NC 28086
USA
Phone: +1(704) 937-7000
Fax: +1(704) 937-9429

Administration &
Systems Development
63 Bovet Rd., Suite 240
San Mateo, CA 94402
U.S.A.
Phone : +1(650) 347-0029

www.pioneer1.com
sales@pioneer1.com
engineering@pioneer1.com

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News Release

Kings Mountain, NC – September 8, 2020 -- Pioneer Motor Bearing Company announced today the appointment of K. Juhani Karhatsu to serve as National Business Development Manager. With almost a lifetime in the power generation industry, Juhani (pronounced “you-hon-ee”), as he likes to be called, will focus on opportunities with new prospective customers while adding significant strength to the support Pioneer has long provided to end-users in the aftermarket.



In addition to his decade-long tenure with Westinghouse Electric Corp., Juhani’s experience will be particularly appreciated by owners and operators of ABB, Alstom, and Brown Boveri steam and combustion turbine-generator sets. From 1990 to his retirement from Alstom Power in 2014, Juhani was the Director of Steam Fleet Services for the U.S., responsible for all Alstom service for all steam turbine generator units designed and manufactured by ABB and Alstom Power. At times working hand-in-hand with his gas turbine colleagues, such as at combined cycle plants, he was responsible for: all customer communications for outage planning; spare parts recommendations; spare parts inventory management; trouble shooting; emergency response; order intake; forecasting future orders; net profit; and maintaining customer relationships. All Alstom customer service managers and spare parts personnel in the U.S. reported to him.

Robert (“Bob”) Swisher, Pioneer’s Technical Sales Manager, observed “At a time when GE has found it challenging to support ABB and Alstom machines of all kinds, Juhani’s experience and knowledge about ABB and Alstom equipment will be invaluable to end users of both steam and gas turbine-generator sets. If he doesn’t know, he’s going to know who to call that knows.”

To say that Juhani has spent almost a lifetime in the power generation industry is an understatement. Born in Finland but raised since he was 4 years old in Sweden, as a child he was hired right out of what Americans today call Middle School by the General Swedish Electrical Limited Company (“ASEA”, years before it entered into a joint venture with Brown Boveri to form ABB). He was placed in ASEA’s 4-year vocational secondary trade school in Finspång, Sweden, as an employee/student. By his 4th year, at 18 years of age, he was on site at power plants learning first hand from his mentors—senior ASEA technical personnel—how to install new steam turbines! Juhani jokes today “That was easier than trouble-shooting problems with existing turbines, so they started us with installations.”

Juhani’s father moved his family to Sweden when Juhani was 4 years old. The family settled in Finspång where his father found employment working on large marine gear reduction boxes

for the STAL turbine manufacturing company, a subsidiary of ASEA (becoming ABB STAL AB in 1988).

After Juhani completed his four year technical secondary school education, Juhani was assigned to the field on turbine installation, repair and trouble-shooting jobs. Juhani gained experience working on plants in Holland, Denmark, Sweden and the U.S. from 1964 to 1979, when Westinghouse Electric's Power Generation Business Unit recruited him and moved him to the U.S. where he was based for years in Detroit and then Chicago to complete the installation of four nuclear powered steam turbines for Commonwealth Edison.

In 1988, ASEA and Brown Boveri of Baden Switzerland created a joint venture company, ASEA Brown Boveri (ABB), and two years later ABB tracked Juhani down to entice him to return to his corporate roots, joining ABB in the U.S. In November 1993, Juhani's history began to merge a bit with Pioneer's, when ABB appointed Pioneer its exclusive licensee to hold and use all ABB intellectual property related to steam turbine bearings for the sale to end-users of bearing repairs and services. As chief of all repair activity for the entire ABB/Alstom U.S. steam fleet in the U.S., Juhani inevitably became acquainted with Pioneer, occasionally visiting Pioneer's North Carolina plant, ABB's exclusive authorized repair facility for bearings.

Pioneer's General Manager, Edgardo Goyret, observed "The education and knowledge Juhani gained from so many years of experience with Westinghouse, ABB and Alstom Power in both the steam and gas turbine sectors equals 'know-how' that is difficult to find in today's power gen market, especially if you're operating ABB/Alstom turbines and generators. He strengthens Pioneer's existing reputation for engineering and technical expertise."

Juhani met his wife, Phyllis, in 1991 in Richmond and they have been married since 1993. Along the way, he earned a B.A. degree, Magna Cum Laude, and "mini" MBA from the University of Richmond. In his spare time he plays golf, works out every day in a gym and enjoys the beach, which may be one reason he and Phyllis are planning to move soon to Florida.

About Pioneer Motor Bearing Company

Pioneer provides both original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and end users, bearing engineering, manufacturing, repair and training expertise to help them design, build, maintain and upgrade large rotating equipment to operate more efficiently and reliably over an extended life. Among other types of bearings, the company designs and builds thrust bearing assemblies that support loads up to and in excess of 1,000,000 pounds. In the "green energy" sector of hydroelectric power generation its customers include virtually all the major hydroelectric OEMs and end users throughout North America. Pioneer is the senior licensee of Siemens Energy, Inc. (Orlando, FL). The company retains to this day the exclusive right to hold and use ABB and Alstom IP related to bearings for the purpose of repair and service, with GE being the successor of interest to the original ABB License Agreement of 1993. Pioneer is also the exclusive American licensee of Michell Bearings of the UK (formerly a member of the Rolls-Royce Group and now a subsidiary of British Engines) and an alliance partner with Yamato Metal (Tokyo, Japan). Pioneer's proprietary designs include the Fluid Pivot® tilting pad journal bearing.