JANUARY 2018

WIRE JOURNAL® INTERNATIONAL

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SPRINGS

Report to Members ■ 2018 Officers

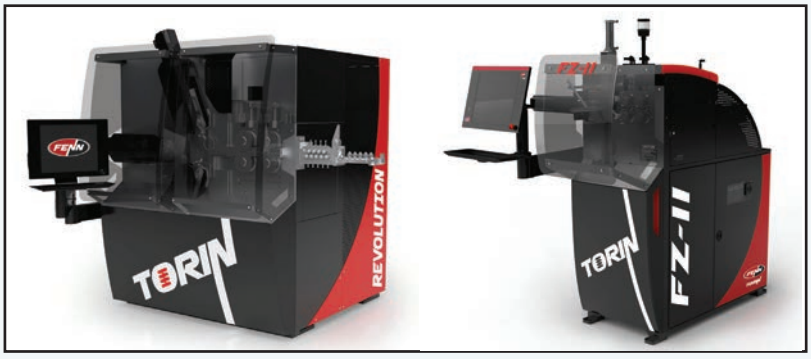
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WIRE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

FENN: ready to make a point...or two...when it comes to spring coilers

At the 2017 staging of SMI, FENN introduced the company's Revolution "R" series of dual-point spring coilers. Below, FENN President Ryan Cutter shares his thoughts on the technology.

WJI: At the 2017 SMI event in Hartford, there was a big focus on single point versus dual-point coilers: is one method inherently better than the other?

Cutter: One method is not inherently better than the other for all applications. It's important to realize that both types of coiling methods have strengths and weaknesses; and both types can make good springs when properly set up. One plus for the dual-point system is that users save on set-up time with three programmable axes for diameter, which makes for quick changeovers from a left- to a right-hand spring helix. There are also time savings with movable wire lines as wire line tooling does not need to be changed with wire size adjustments. Additional features include programmable horizontal and vertical pitch, programmable servo elliptical cutter motion, complete system diagnostics available through the user interface, and programming available in multiple languages.



Two spring coilers from FENN: the company's Revolution dual-point system, l, and its FZ-ll single-point model.

WJI: Dual-point coilers have a much broader base in Europe: why is that?

Cutter: Historically speaking, spring makers used the dual point approach in Europe while spring makers in North America used the single point method. Therefore, you will find more of a particular coiler in a geographic region partly because they have been using them longer and they are familiar with them.

WJI: Is this akin to getting a "Chevy truck" driver to switch to a Ford?

Cutter: People in the industry often have a strong preference for one type of machine so that can be true, however the type of truck a person buys is generally an emotional decision. While there may be some differences in spec and price, the capabilities of the two brands are very similar. In the case of spring coilers, there are more definite differences in what each type of machine does well. It's more like asking the question "should I buy an SUV or a pickup truck?"

WJI: If you can offer either type to a customer, what do you do in terms of providing advice to customers? How gray are these choices?

Cutter: The best machine for any given customer is the machine that is best suited to the needs of their shop. Either type of machine can make quality springs so it comes down to understanding their needs and their customer's needs. Some things to consider are the type of springs in their workload and where they need capacity. If the requirement is for only compression springs, the dual point coiler helps to eliminate the risks associated with marking the ID of the coil. If the customer needs to make a mixture of springs and wants to change quickly from coil springs to torsion springs with some bent ends, a single point machine may offer more versatility. Another important consideration is what your team is most comfortable with. Most of the choices are fairly gray and come down to preference. There are some end customers who will dictate the type of machine used to make their springs and that will be very black and white.

I don't think it is a one or the other situation. When making springs, both types of machines offer different strengths so our feeling is that there will be more of a blending of the two technologies within the industry. We don't believe that one technology will completely displace the other. For example, a shop may want to use dual -point machines for their compression springs but may want to use single points for extension or torsion springs.

WJI: To what degree does success ultimately relate to the choices that were made for equipment?

Cutter: The most important asset in any shop are the people who make it run every day. Having a skilled setup technician and operator will make or break the quality springs you receive from any type of coiler. If you invest in quality machines, regardless of the coiling method, and focus on developing a dedicated and well trained team, you will have happy customers and a successful shop. FENN is dedicated to building quality machines for all of our clients' needs, and supporting them with the best training and service to help them succeed.