



Board level repair at Heartland



Patrick Cocherl, Heartland president



Heartland technicians, the can-do crew



New 38,000 sf Heartland facility near Kansas City



SERVICE

Service, of course, is of utmost importance to mission critical equipment. All Panasonic Toughbooks are serviced by one independent facility located in Leawood, Kansas, near Kansas City, Missouri. I expected just another repair facility, a nondescript shed full of parts and guys with soldering irons. Instead, I found an impeccably neat and clean, superbly planned, and extremely well run and managed high tech servicing plant that just blew me away.

Heartland Services was started in 1987 as a component level board repair facility by Patrick Cocherl. Cocherl grew up in Gary, Indiana, and is the quintessential American entrepreneur. Cocherl has two servicing facilities, a 48,000 sqft plant near Chicago that services Panasonic copiers, fax machines, and printers, and the brand-new 38,000 sqft Leawood facility that exclusively services Toughbooks. The MBA-educated Cocherl literally exudes leadership and he is very proud of the impressive facility he built for Panasonic and his team. Walking through the plant, he talks about his company and his team and it's immediately clear that this is much more than just a shop. The boss cares. The boss is proud. The boss is tough, just like the equipment that is serviced here. He only employs the best degreed students and military people. And you need a 4.0 average. Those who pass muster are treated well. Turnover is virtually nil. Seven people in 16 years. Four out of the first five employees are still there. Families come to company parties. Heartland is family.

**STRIVE TO
SERVE THE
WAY YOU
WOULD LIKE TO
BE SERVED.**

Heartland motto

Cocherl rattles off the specs: The entire facility is completely static-free. All utilities are outside the building to keep the interior unaffected. There is forced air. You'll never find a single dust bunny anywhere. Heartland receives between 100 and 300 machines every day. A staff of 43 on the tech floor has access to a huge inventory of parts. If a unit is out of warranty, nothing ever costs more than the quoted estimate. Every unit goes through three quality control checks. Every unit is also cleaned and detailed. Turnaround time is 1.59 days average over the past five years. The return rate is less than one tenth of one percent. (And that one is usually damaged in transit or by the receiving operator.) All assets are tracked. And if a customer wants an extended warranty, a hot spare program, hardware integration, imaging, or whole unit refurb, they do that, too. Panasonic factory reps are there every month to discuss problems and listen to recommendations. "Our recommendations have saved Panasonic millions," smiles Cocherl.

Why would a huge company like Panasonic not have its own servicing facility in the US? Because Heartland proved to be perfect for the job. Board level repairs? Sure. No problem. And nothing ever needs to be shipped back to factory to be fixed. After a 15-year relationship with Panasonic, there is trust on both sides. "The Japanese are huge on loyalty," says Cocherl, "and they keep their promises." And so does he.

All of that makes Heartland more than just a service facility. It is one of the secret ingredients of the overall success of the Panasonic Toughbook. 🏠

