

# SSV Team Mows Down Overgrown Repair Costs

Last year Bright Wood started switching from steel banding to lighter and less expensive polyester. That is good.

Gradually the company has been acquiring battery- and pneumatic-powered equipment to make the task of applying banding easier. That is good. The new automated tooling is more prone to break whenever it is dropped or mishandled. That is bad.

The solution is for Bright Wood people to squash old habits by handling

the battery-powered equipment more gently. One plant has already spent \$3,000 in the first five months of the year on repairs.

In the meantime, two millwrights and one electrician have found ways to make the new banders more resilient and cheaper to repair. “After a Columbia bander has been dropped so many times, the capacitor falls off and then the Central Processing Unit (CPU) doesn’t work,” Jason Moser, Madras millwright, said. “In some

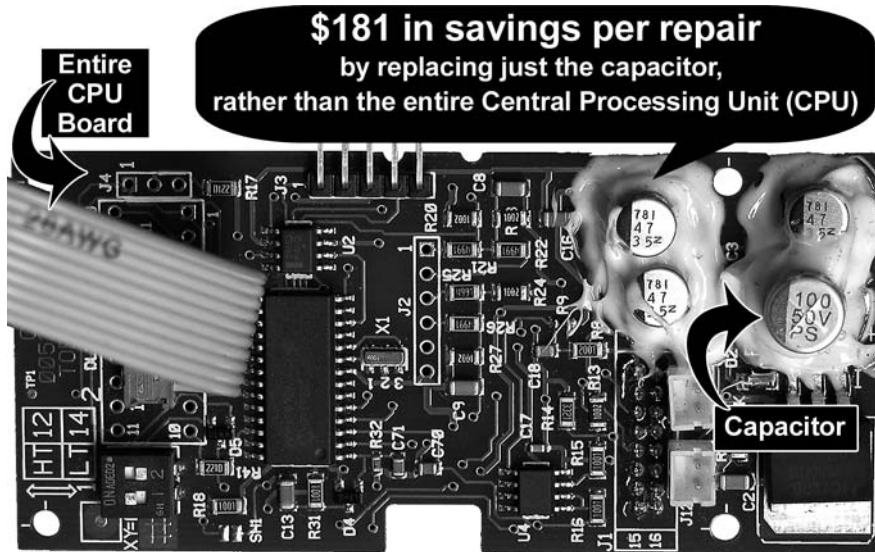
cases, it also takes out the motor.”

A new CPU board costs around \$195. Electrician Dan Freeman, however, figured out a way to replace just the damaged capacitor, saving approximately \$181 per repair. The team also extended each 46-cent capacitor’s lifespan by gluing them to the board with silicone.

Motors have been trickier and a perfect fix has not yet been found, but give them time. Like the CPU boards, banding equipment suppliers sell only the entire motor and not the individual components. Dan found some graphite electrical brushes on Phil’s Ace Hardware’s shelves not far from where he picked up the capacitors. The brushes make the necessary electrical contact to get the motor running for \$6, compared to the \$425 to \$900 replacement price.

Unfortunately the current brushes are too soft, but the search is on for a sturdier graphite and carbon impregnated version.

“Jason and Skip [Sturdy] told me about the problems,” Dan said. “As a team, we came up with the solutions. These will be good banders if we can address the little problems that cause them to fail.”



Instead of playing the blame game, Madras millwrights **Skip Sturdy** and **Jason Moser** along with electrician **Dan Freeman** decided to see what they could do to lower repair costs on battery-powered banders.