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Hey everyone,

I’m Sam, and after 27 years, today’s my turn to say thank you and goodbye—though “goodbye” feels too final for a place that’s been my second home since 1999.

I walked in here as a junior technician who just hoped not to strip any screws on day one.
I stayed because this place taught me what reliability actually looks like: showing up, doing the work right, and having each other’s backs.

A few snapshots stick with me.
In 2007, when we launched the Phoenix product line, the shop hummed like a radio finally tuned to a clear station.
We were tired, wired, and somehow sharper than ever.
There’s a certain pride in watching something you built run on its own power—and knowing your fingerprints are still inside, even after the casing goes on.

Between 2012 and this year, I got to mentor 35 new hires.
If any of you are here: I learned as much from your questions as you did from my answers.
You reminded me to explain the “why,” not just the “how,” and to keep the bar high but the door open.

From 2018 to this year, I led the safety committee.
We logged zero lost-time incidents.
That wasn’t luck.
That was craft.
That was people taking a breath before they reached, asking a second person to

spot, and never rushing the last 5% of a job.
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That’s a legacy I’m proud to leave behind.

And I’ll never forget the winter storm in 2014.
Shipping bay door jammed, wind howling sideways, the clock laughing at us.
We huddled up, rigged a fix with a ratchet strap and an embarrassing amount of coffee, and still hit the customer deadline.
That night summed up what we do here: we solve the problem that’s in front of us, together, and we don’t make a speech about it—we just get it done.

What I’ve loved most is the craftsmanship and the teamwork.
The quiet pride of a clean weld.
The sound of a test bench at 2 a.m. when only the night shift and the machines are awake.
Speaking of which, to the night shift: you kept this place moving when nobody else saw it.
I did, and I’m grateful.

To my supervisors, thank you for the steady steering.
To the shop floor, you taught me more than any manual.
And to everyone who ever let me borrow a tool and trusted me to bring it back—Laura would like you to know I’m now required to label everything in the garage at home.
Apparently “the long flat screwdriver” is not a sufficient filing system.

What’s next?
Slower mornings.
A national parks road trip where the only deadline is a sunset.
Volunteering at the local maker space, passing on a few tricks and probably picking up a few better ones.
Restoring some vintage radios until they sing again.
More sawdust in the workshop, more hikes in state parks, more weekend barbecues with the neighbors.

I’m not disappearing.
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I’ll always be a call away if you need a second set of eyes, a sanity check, or someone to remind you to wear your gloves.

Thank you for the years, the trust, and the work we can point to and say, “We built that.”
Take care of each other.
Keep the standard high.
And when the door jams, you know where the ratchet straps are.

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