The ARPAC Group designs machines to package products of various shapes and sizes, either individually or grouped into a tray, case or bundle. Equipment is custom-designed to shrink wrap, stretch wrap, palletize and erect or load corrugated trays and cases.

For nearly 40 years, ARPAC has continually raised the bar to provide reliable, custom packaging solutions. The machinery on display at PACK EXPO 2010 is no exception. ARPAC will be exhibiting over 20 machines in 6,600 square feet of display space, including a fully integrated packaging line that demonstrates start-to-finish technology for an individual can to a fully wrapped pallet.

On display at PACK EXPO 2010 is the new MCE 3400 Case Erector, an in-line 10 per minute case erector, that provides a compact, reliable solution for customers seeking a more economical alternative to higher speed case erectors. This machine’s ergonomic design makes blank loading easy and eliminates the need to have both a left-hand and right-hand machine design. The MCE 3400 Case Erector’s adjustment wheels and indicator scales allow fast and easy, tool-less changeovers and setups.

Additionally, unlike most case erectors that operate using 230 volts of electricity, the portable MCE 3400 Case Erector uses 120 volts and can be plugged into any standard power outlet.

The MCE 3400 Case Erector uses an Allen-Bradley MicroLogix 1100 programmable logic controller (PLC) from Rockwell Automation to manage overall packaging functions. The EtherNet/IP-enabled controller provides connectivity ease and a built-in LCD screen displays controller status, I/O status and simple operator messages. EtherNet/IP connectivity also allows remote troubleshooting and thus provides improved support options for customers.
An Allen-Bradley PanelView™ Plus 600 human-machine interface (HMI) allows operators to easily access information about machine activity and productivity and quickly identify and troubleshoot problems.

“The scalable control platform gives customers day-to-day control capabilities along with the flexibility to accommodate future expansion,” said Brian Ormanic, applications engineer, ARPAC Group.

Also on display in the booth is an ARPAC-Hefestus ARTEMIS Modified Atmosphere Packaging Machine (MAP), which extends the ARPAC-Hefestus product offering to include sanitary food production where high pressure, caustic wash-down cleaning is required. ARPAC partnered with Hefestus to provide customers MAP machinery that enables long shelf life of packaged perishable food products, such as sushi or cheese.

Trays of food are fed into the machine, packaged and sealed using ARPAC-Hefestus patented Shelf Life Booster™ (SLB™) technology to remove the oxygen and replace it with inert gas to extend the product’s shelf life. Using SLB™ technology instead of a traditional vacuum/gas exchange systems promotes shelf life extension without product appearance or texture degradation. SLB™ technology also eliminates the need for preservatives or freezing and enables storage and delivery of fresh food products at moderately chilled or room temperatures.

An Allen-Bradley Kinetix 300 EtherNet/IP indexing servo drive seamlessly integrates with Allen-Bradley MP-Series™ stainless-steel servo motors to power the machine. Even with stainless-steel housing, standard servo motors typically last only five to seven years in a rigorous wash-down application. MP-Series stainless-steel servo motors extend the lifetime of the machine.

“Our partnership with Rockwell Automation and Hefestus enables us to help food manufacturers improve hygienic machine design,” said Ormanic. “Plus, by standardizing on Rockwell Automation solutions, we can provide customers a familiar, intuitive platform for machine control.”

ARPAC Group also offers Virtual Technician Services on its equipment – a remote diagnostic system in which expertly trained technicians connect to a customer’s machines to perform diagnostics, adjustments and upgrades instead of having to rush a service technician onsite. ARPAC Group provides hardware and software at the customer’s location, allowing machines to communicate with secured networks. The machines can connect to the system through the customer’s EtherNet/IP network or using cellular technology.

By using Virtual Technician Services, users can also input e-mail addresses of relevant plant operation personnel. In doing so, the ARPAC machine will automatically generate e-mails when desired, or when programmed conditions or alarms occur on the machine. It will also send periodic e-mails containing production reports, downtime, efficiency and other useful information to selected e-mail recipients. In addition, it will allow qualified operators and maintenance personnel to order parts directly from the HMI screens with e-mail links to plant purchasing department or even directly to ARPAC parts and tech services.