

all ahead

Moving Allentown Ahead



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Allentown Ahead's Business of the Month for May 2010

Olson Technologies: A History of Excellence in Allentown

Olson Technologies was recently named the May 2010 “Business of the Month” at a press conference held at their downtown facility, located at 160 W. Walnut Street. Olson Technologies was selected by members of the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee of Allentown Ahead based on their long history of operating as a successful urban manufacturer in downtown Allentown. Olson Technologies employs--as well as pays family-sustaining wages to--45 people between their manufacturing plant and office buildings, with jobs ranging from valve assembler, machinist and plant superintendent to receptionist and chief engineer. “We are very pleased to be recognized by the city for our long-standing contributions to the work force and manufacturing process in downtown Allentown,” said Peter Farkas, CFO

Olson Technologies is a specialty valve manufacturing company that serves a variety of different industries including power, water, industrial and construction. Their products range from small, one-inch valves up to larger 122-inch valves composed of cast iron and steel. In the Allentown plant, the valves are machined, assembled, tested, painted and shipped world-wide.

Under its current management, Olson

Technologies is a locally owned, family-operated business but they also have a rich manufacturing history dating back to the Civil War era. Olson is comprised of two older companies - W.F. Mosser and Son, which operated in Olson's current facilities, and Homestead Valve



Company which was based out of Pittsburgh. Purchased and renamed in 1985 by its current President Jim Olson, Olson Technologies is a continuation of the original companies, touting a remarkable 148 years of operating in the same building and maintaining the same brands for its products.

In its current product line, Mosser is a specialty valve manufacturing group which identifies large valves that are made to special order. Homestead is a commodity value manufacturing group that is used to identify valves made for inventory.

Growth has been, and is projected to remain, steady for Olson Technologies, which reached a milestone of \$10 mil-



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Olson Technologies

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lion in sales in 2008. Success can be attributed to the sale of the large Mosser valves, as well as from the growth of some newer products for the water and wastewater markets. Olson Technologies' position in the waste and wastewater markets will continue to drive business forward.

In addition to the longevity of its location and brands, Olson Technologies also prides themselves on their low turnover in employees, with many employees having 35 years under their belts. Olson attributes this to "keeping a low profile, making a nice profit and treating our employees well." As they continue to experience growth and increase employment, they have the accessibility of a talented and local workforce due to the closing of major manufacturing companies like Mack Trucks and Bethlehem Steel.

The location of the plant and its proximity to Lehigh Valley International Airport, Philadelphia and New York has been positive for Olson Technologies being that their customers frequently visit to witness the testing of the valves. "It's important to make our customer feels comfortable. We are excited about the restaurants and hotels that are being promoted downtown. Customers stay anywhere from 1 day to a week, we are always looking for ways to keep them entertained," said Farkas.

Olson Technologies operations encompass four buildings along Walnut and Front Streets, with the current manufacturing operations and warehouses consisting of over 140,000 square feet. Two buildings are used for office functions, housing the sales and executive staff, as well as the engineering, accounting and inventory control functions, and the two plants are where the valves are made, as-

sembled and tested.

"The Business Recruitment and Retention Committee created the Business of the Month program because we believe outreach to and recognition of the extraordinary businesses in the City is one of the best ways to retain businesses in the City and encourage new ones to move here. As this program moves forward we plan to recognize businesses of all sizes and types and hope that community members will nominate other worthy recipients," said Jack Gross, Committee Chair and Partner at Gross McGinley LLP. The Business Recruitment & Retention Committee is currently accepting nominations to be reviewed in June. Please send nominations to businessofthemoth@allentownahead.com along with a brief description of how the business exemplifies excellence.

Energy Conservation

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improvements to their properties. The Sustainable Energy Fund has an established program for commercial loans, and AFC First Financial Corporation / Keystone HELP has a similar program for residents. The Allentown Energy Conservation Program can reduce the interest rate on these programs substantially. There is also a rebate program for qualified commercial and non-profit property owners to provide funding for these same purposes.

To discover the details of this program, find the simple brochure/application on the city's website, or go to: <http://www.allentownpa.gov/Portals/0/files/community/ecp-web.pdf>. You can also contact Tom Kerr in the Allentown Sustainability Office at 610/437-8713 or e-mail him at kerrT@allentowncity.org.

