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Molding firm reshapes for health care

Butler company now makes components for medical devices

By **KATHLEEN GALLAGHER**
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Posted: **Sept. 21, 2008**

A Butler company that transformed itself from a rubber and plastics molder for industrial customers into a medical device component manufacturer has completed a \$2 million expansion.

Molded Rubber and Plastic Corp.'s expansion includes two new clean rooms and four new molding machines, said Greg Riemer, vice president of sales and marketing and a minority owner in the company.

It is part of an effort by the company, known as MRPC, to grow faster by gaining market share and possibly making acquisitions, Riemer said.

"The plan is we need to demonstrate to our customers that we can meet the difficult molding challenges our competitors can't, and that we have the clean room and equipment to do the job," said John Schlump, the company's chief executive officer.

MRPC is a family-owned business founded in 1941. It has no debt, about \$15 million of revenue and employs about 100 people, he said.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Briggs & Stratton Corp. was its biggest customer, Riemer said. When Briggs began moving much of its manufacturing south, MRPC didn't follow.

"We either had to change or we would have faced some tough times," Reimer said.

Now about 70% of everything the company does is related to the medical device and health care markets, he said.

"We've got a very sound medical customer base. We're playing with the big boys," Schlump said.

The Boemer family, MRPC's owners, brought in Schlump last year to manage the company and develop a succession plan. Schlump previously was president and CEO of Olson Co. in Waukesha.

"Many companies have gone down the drain because management hasn't thought this way. These are really good, forward-thinking people who transformed that business," said Carl Mielke, a former corporate executive who leads the TEC group Riemer participates in. TEC is a professional development group for high-level corporate decision-makers.

MRPC's two new clean rooms cover about 5,000 square feet.

Molded Rubber and Plastic Corp.



Greg Riemer is vice president of sales and marketing of Molded Rubber and Plastic Corp., which uses its clean rooms (background) to make components for medical devices such as laparoscopic and cardiac-rhythm management equipment.

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One of the new clean rooms is classified for making devices that can be implanted in humans, Reimer said.

Along with investing in its physical plant, MRPC recently hired three new executives, including a vice president of engineering.

"We are impressed with MRPC's solid management team and their ability to expand and grow in a challenging environment," said Dave Anderson, a senior vice president at M&I Bank, the company's bank.

Wisconsin is home to a lot of molding companies, Schlump said, but only MRPC works with rubber, plastic and silicone.