

## Chip-Tech Ltd.

Chip-Tech Ltd. continues to increase its presence in the McAllen - Brownsville corridor. Chip-Tech already has in place in-plant facilities in Reynosa, warehousing in Pharr and numerous maquiladoras under contract with inventory programs. A skilled customer support team in its corporate offices handles all this. A regional manager manages the local infrastructure, with an office in the foreign trade zone in McAllen. Under his jurisdiction are the hiring and training of local employees as well as the setting up of in-plant locations. Dan Flores, Chip-Tech's regional manager knows that 2003 will be an interesting time for the Valley and Chip-Tech.

Chip-Tech continues to see growth in this area and is starting to invest for the long term. When asked why is Chip-Tech is not only maintaining but increasing its market share during difficult economic conditions in the technology sector, Neal Stevens, Chip-Tech vice president attributes it to the company's commitment to quality and service.

"We are a private company and do not have to bend to shareholder pressure; of course profitability is important but so is our word," he says. "We agree under contract to supply a specified amount of product at all times in our contract. Chip-Tech is currently monitoring 1,300 lines items in one facility with more than 95 percent of the product meeting the eight-week supply level.

"Chip-Tech will not allow your line to go down. We probably have more employees per sales dollar than all of our competition and while others are downsizing during this economic downturn we are hiring and training employees for our customer support team for the upcoming year. Chip-Tech's support team is well trained and versed in the understanding that the customer comes first and the production lines must run.

"Chip-Tech sells product competitively from well over one hundred different manufacturers, but when one of them pushes a scheduled delivery out or a customer moves up a scheduled order this is where we shine."

Being planned for 2003 is a local distribution center in Harlingen, Texas. Chip-Tech is eyeing the Harlingen location because its proximity to Brownsville and McAllen and is easily accessible by ground or air. This center will be a stocking facility carrying customer specific product as well as a consignment center for some of Chip-Tech's strategic partners. This consigned product will be generic components commonly used in everyday production. It will consist of a full line of chip resistors, capacitors as well as LED's and discrete components. All OEM's under contract with Chip-Tech will be able to monitor their inventory as well as inventory consigned to the Harlingen facility via the Internet. This facility will be able to ship or have product picked up at a moment's notice.

Chip-Tech has morphed over the years. This company once known as a gray market supplier got its start during the electronic parts shortages and helped locate allocated and obsolete product. Today it is not only a Stocking Franchised distributor with more than 45 lines; it is a business partner bringing inventory solutions, cost saving programs and stability to a volatile industry. Chip-Tech is currently located in McAllen and Brownsville and a San Diego office should be open by February.

## Bales Mold

Bales Mold Service, Inc., an ISO 9002 certified, provider of engineered finishes and coatings for the precision tooling industry and manufacturers worldwide, is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> business anniversary.

First established in 1978 in a garage in Downers Grove, Ill., the company has over the years steadily grown in size as well as products and services to become known as one of the few full-service companies in their business. Bales' reputation for innovation and quality workmanship has taken the company into manufacturing facilities around the globe.

"Today's technologies, both computer-based and

manufacturing oriented, have made it possible for us to meet and do business with companies across the U.S., Puerto Rico and Mexico, as well as in Western Europe and as far away as Finland," says Steve Bales, company president. "We couldn't be more proud of what we've been able to accomplish in 25 years, and we look forward to many more years of doing business with our valued customers."

Bales and his brother Mike set out 25 years ago to provide the best in diamond polishing and hard chrome plating. Today, diamond polishing is a hallmark of Bales' service offerings, but customers have a long list of products and services to choose from, such as Bales' exclusive Nicklon and NiHard coatings, plus Diamond-Chrome (Dia-Clust), Electroless Nickel, Hard Chrome, Micro T.I.G. and conventional welding, and all levels of surface finishes including specific military certifications.

"We try to bring at least one new product or service into the mix each year," says Bales. "We see the importance of continually improving current technologies and finding new ways of making our customers' jobs better, even easier. It's a competitive market out there and Bales Mold Service wants to do whatever it takes to stay on top."

Bales has served customers in virtually every industry, including automotive, military, housewares, railroad, medical, appliances, sporting goods, aerospace and even various cottage industries. In 2001, Bales opened its second plant in Harlingen, Texas, to better serve the needs of the maquiladora industry located along the Texas/Mexico border, in the Rio Grande Valley.

Bales expanded its product line by developing its now popular SPI gauge – a pocket-sized tool that, through quality craftsmanship, ensures customers that the finish they desire is indeed what they get from Bales or any finish and coating vendor. With the SPI gauge, Bales answered the call for a durable, reliable and portable instrument that customers use every day.



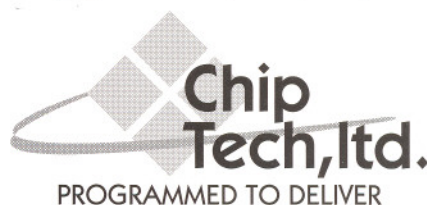
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