

Elastec Inc.

Elastec Inc., a Carmi Illinois based corporation, is expanding its manufacturing capacity by 30,000 square feet and adding ten new jobs, thus boosting the Southern Illinois economy.



Elastec staff members in their new facility in Carmi Illinois. Left to right: Jerome Riley, Plant Manager; Dave Muse, Marketing Director and Jeff Bohleber, CFO.

Donnie Wilson and his partner Jeff Cantrell owned a tank truck business that hauls oil from the oil fields in and around White County in Southern Illinois. As part of their business, they saw oil spills regularly, and in the early 1990's Mr. Wilson began experimenting to create a product to make their work cleaner and easier. Elastec Inc. began with one product, an oil skimmer, but since the product was patented in 1992, the company has grown to become the largest manufacturer of oil spill recovery equipment in the United States.

Today Elastec Inc. is an environmental products company specializing in oil containment boom, skimmers and related equipment for pollution control and special use incinerators. The company's products are now used in fifty countries around the world. Exports account for over 70% of sales for this company with annual revenues between \$5 and \$7 million. Today the firm employs thirty four people in two plants: one facility is in Cocoa, Florida where American

Marine Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary is located, and the newly expanded manufacturing facility in Carmi, Illinois. Jeff Bohleber, the Chief Financial Officer of the company, and David Muse the Marketing Director, have been with the firm since its earliest days, as have the majority of employees. Elastec sells their products through a network of dealers and distributors in thirty countries world wide.

In the Summer of 2003, Becky Williams, Director of the Southeastern Illinois College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assisted Mr. Bohleber and Mr. Muse to identify resources for training employees with new equipment and safety issues. The Southeastern Illinois College Small Business Development Center is supported by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. According to Mr. Bohleber “through the SBDC program, we have been able to step out and adapt safety programs that might have been put off without their assistance. Our firm’s interaction with the Southeastern SBDC has been excellent. They have helped us on several occasions and we continue to seek their advice as we expand the business.”

Elastec has grown by devising new uses for their products, expanding their markets overseas and by acquiring American Marine Inc. in 1997, a manufacturer of marine booms. Booms are vinyl-coated fabrics that can be used in a variety of water-based applications. “Oil containment booms” says Mr. Muse “are used by the cranberry industry, brine shrimpers in the Great Salt Lake, and by the pollution containment industry for preventing contaminated silt from moving when dredging occurs.” The firm also makes a Hydro Fire Boom “used to surround oil leaks and large spills in off shore water applications, so the oil slick can be burned off before it reaches shore” said Mr. Muse.

The firm also has developed several special use incinerator products. For the pollution control market, the Smart Ash™ incinerator burns oily rags and other oil soaked materials. The Drug Terminator™ another specialty incinerator, is used by law enforcement agencies to assure that confiscated drugs are “destroyed completely with unquestionable protocol. The incinerator burns the drugs without smoke” said Mr. Muse. Finally Elastec manufactures and sells the MediBurn™ incinerator, a portable incinerator that can be transported to remote locations. According to Mr. Bohleber these incinerators are “currently in use by the US Army in Iraq for medical units that need to destroy medical waste. The incinerators are small and can be flown in by helicopter.”

Elastec’s new Carmi Illinois facility, in a building formerly owned by Wal-Mart, has increased the size of their manufacturing and office space from 23,000 to 53,000 square feet. Part of the marine boom operation now located in Florida, will be transferred to the Illinois facility this fall. According to Mr. Bohleber “we have appreciated all the help we have received from DCEO over the years, through the SBDC and through Bill Shanks of the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center in Carbondale.” The firm may sell all over the world, but they are committed to Carmi and their home-town roots.

The Southeastern Illinois College Small Business Development Center is a member of the Illinois Small Business Development Center Network working in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the US Small Business Administration.

