

Plastics News

Auto work fuels growth at West Michigan Molding

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West Michigan Molding Inc. has purchased eight Haitian injection molding machines in the last two years — including the most recent, an all-electric, 337-ton Zhafir Venus — to keep pace with the strong automotive market.

West Michigan Molding hit a low of 90 employees during the recession. Now the Grand Haven molder employs 230 people. Sales have rebounded sharply, said Executive

President Terry Kozanecki.

Automotive accounts for 80 percent of the company's business. Other markets include construction, horticultural and recreational products.

Of the 57 injection molding machines at West Michigan Molding, all the newest have been purchased from Absolute Haitian Corp. the distributor of China-built Haitian injection presses.

"Automotive is a challenging market, no doubt, but we are committed to operating successfully in this sector," Kozanecki said. "We have maintained low operating costs, achieved high quality goals and have been able to ramp up quickly to respond to the return of automotive manufacturing over the past couple of years."

West Michigan Molding bought the Zhafir Venus all-electric press at Absolute Haitian's open house last year at a new technical center in Parma, Ohio, outside of Cleveland. Absolute Haitian filled the order on very short notice, he said.

Two years ago, the company bought its first Haitians, two vertical-clamp,

vertical injection presses with clamping forces of 280 tons. West Michigan Molding followed that up with three more 280-ton verticals. All the machines have rotary tables and are able to carry large molds.

"We bought five large vertical-vertical presses to overmold seat springs with polypropylene for a Tier 1 supplier to Toyota, Ford, Hyundai and Kia," Kozanecki said.

Soon, the molder bought larger, servo-hydraulic Mars presses, investing in an 1,800-ton machine about a year ago, and a 1,100-tonner in mid-2013.

On the newest all-electric press, Kozanecki said they installed a problem tool — an automotive part molded from a polycarbonate/ABS material that required a high processing temperature. "The sink marks we were having with the 12-ounce part went away," he said.

Absolute Haitian is based in Worcester, Mass.

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