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SenDEC ramps up sales, work force

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Broadening the services it provides to customers has helped boost sales and staff at SenDEC Corp.

The Fairport firm has increased employment by 123 workers since 2003, while experiencing a 287 percent increase in sales.

The growth landed the firm in the No. 2 spot on this year's list of Rochester's Top 100 companies, sponsored by the Rochester Business Alliance Inc. and KPMG LLC.

Kenton Fiske, SenDEC's president and CEO, said the company has succeeded by providing a range of services. The company's origins trace back to 1972, but it was incorporated in 1976 by Fiske, former Xerox Corp. engineer, and partners Edward Reehil and Joseph Holroyd.

"We aren't just a contract manufacturer; we have become an extension of our customers," Fiske said.

The firm provides contract electronics manufacturing and design engineering services for the commercial/industrial, consumer, medical, military and telecommunication markets. Its clients range from startups to Fortune 100 corporations.

In addition to assembling printed circuit boards, SenDEC provides designs for manufacturability resulting in lower production costs, assembly and prototype and test services.

SenDEC employs some 189 workers, including 166 in contract electronics manufacturing services. Its strategy is to manufacture stable products where quality is critical, Fiske said.

Michael Fiske, Kenton's son and SenDEC marketing manager, said a recent trend is for firms to increase the scope of their outsourcing, seeking to reduce their number of key suppliers and developing closer partnerships with suppliers that make the cut, like SenDEC.

"For us, this has translated into our role increasing from being a traditional circuit board assembler to being a true extension of their operation in the up-front and/or supply chain aspect of their business," he said.

Sandra Gault, executive vice president of Allworx, a division of East Rochester-



SenDEC employment based on fiscal years ending July 31

2007 - 189 (current)

2006 - 146

2005 - 103

2004 - 81

2003 - 66

Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

"We aren't just a contract manufacturer; we have become an extension of our customers," said Kenton Fiske, SenDEC's president and CEO.

based InSciTek Microsystems Inc., said SenDEC manufactures two systems for its voice over Internet protocol business.

Allworx has been working with SenDEC for roughly a year and chose the firm as a manufacturing partner because of the full set of services it offers.

SenDEC has a strong commitment to helping its customers succeed, Gault said.

"SenDEC employees are easy to work with," Gault said. "They are very understanding of our business needs and are committed to helping us grow our business."

Kenton Fiske said the firm's reputation has grown largely through word-of-mouth.

"We can toot our own horn, but nothing beats a recommendation from a third party with firsthand experience of our services that brags about us," he said.

He declined to disclose revenues for the privately held firm but estimates sales in fiscal 2007, which runs through July 31, will increase 35 percent over last year.

SenDEC will continue to grow in the markets it serves and pursue new mar-

kets, including the energy field, he said.

The firm is positioned to provide additional services to customers in the areas of new product introduction, design for manufacturability and supply chain management, Fiske said.

To remain competitive, SenDEC invests heavily in technology. In 2005 and 2006 combined, the firm spent more than \$4 million in automated assembly, test and analysis equipment. Company officials expect to continue at that rate this fiscal year.

Recent investments included the areas of automatic optical inspection—which can inspect all parts of a board optically—and X-ray inspection, also used to identify and solve problems that would be impossible to detect through visual inspection.

Substantial money also has gone into lines to assemble boards that are RoHS compliant. Started last year in the European Union, the directive aims to eliminate the use of certain hazardous substances, such as lead, cadmium and mercury, in

electrical and electronic equipment. A number of states and countries are incorporating the initiative as well.

The ISO-9001:2000 certified firm last year invested in Workmanship Standards training for its work force, which allowed them to manufacture assemblies required to meet military specifications.

SenDEC, through its products group,

manufactures its own line of solid-state electronic hour meters, tachometers and engine monitors, which are sold worldwide to the industrial, home and garden, and racing industries.

The meters track equipment running time and alert operators to periodic maintenance such as oil changes, lubrications or muffler replacements.

Fiske said the employees make the firm a success.

Last year, SenDEC received the 2006 Rochester Business Ethics Award in the small-company category. The awards are sponsored by the Rochester chapter of the Society of Financial Service Professionals, the RBA and St. John Fisher College.

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