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Atek Plastics of Kerrville recently signed a four-year contract for one of its product lines. The company, primarily focused on manufacturing plastic components used in healthcare, plans to expand its facility on Holdsworth Dr. and create new jobs in the coming months. Courtesy Photo

LOCAL PLASTICS COMPANY ENJOYS GROWTH

They are located off the beaten path and are not widely known in the Hill Country, but ATEK Plastics is coming in loud and clear in their industry.

The local plastics manufacturer is a Kerrville business, that recently secured a four-year contract extension for a group of its products and looks to expand in the coming months.

It isn't unusual for a curious citizen to walk through the doors at ATEK and ask what it is exactly that they do.

While the company has been at its 67,000 square-foot Holdsworth Drive location for more than 20 years, it was only when construction of the thoroughfare was completed and more people began to pass by the facility that awareness and curiosity were raised.

In a nutshell, ATEK purchases raw plastic pellets, melts them, injects them into molds and then into one of its 29 operating presses to create parts and components for several industries. These components are then shipped directly to the customer or to a sister company that then assembles the parts for the customer.

In past years, the industries served were very diversified, but recently the highest growth area has been in the medical field where ATEK manufacturers components used in surgery preparation, heart surgery, dialysis and even stem cell research and treatment.

In 2010 manufacturing for medical applications made up 94 percent of ATEK's sales. The company still supplies parts for the food service industry, construction and other customers.

Because the relationship with the medical industry is strong and growing, the company has been able to avoid many of the issues faced by other companies during the ongoing recession. These strong results are reflected in ATEK being named a finalist for the 2010 Processor of the Year by SPI/Plastics News.

The company currently employs 61 people and booked \$14.5 million in sales in 2010. Both of those numbers are expected to rise in 2011.

While the company is highly automated, including the use of many robots, they also anticipate doing more hiring in the coming months. Also, because many of their products are used in the medical field, they have also installed portable "clean rooms" to insure they are of the highest quality.

The new contract extension was signed with CareFusion, a publicly traded company out of San Diego that employs more than 14,000 people worldwide.

In 2010 ATEK shipped more than 170 million components to CareFusion, but with the new contract it expects that number to rise to 235 million annually.