

## Mack adds clean room for orthopedic devices

By Mike Verespej

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PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

ANAHEIM, CALIF. (Feb. 15, 2:30 p.m. ET) -- With an eye toward giving a boost to its fast-growing orthopedic business, Mack Molding has created a new business unit dedicated to orthopedics and disposable medical devices and added a Class 100,000 clean room in its headquarters plant in Arlington, Vt., to support that market.

The new 2,000 square foot modular clean room will have dual air-lock, rapid roll-up doors for easy product flow and quick tool changes, and six 110-tons all-electric Toshiba injection molding machines--three of them brand new; the others purchased in the last two years.

The presses will have high-pressure water containers to allow more versatility in resin selection, and use 60 percent less energy than equivalent hydraulic presses, Mack said.

"It is right next to our white room molding," which has hydraulic presses, said Jeff Somple, president of Mack's Northern operations. "With many orthopedic products moving to disposables, this is a great opportunity for us."

Somple said Mack created a business unit for orthopedics because products for that market "requires a little different skill sets and a lot more validation" than some other medical markets. It also will give customers the ability to interact with people specifically dedicated to that business segment, he said.

"Our customers will now have people at Mack with specific expertise who understand hips and knees, machined parts, plastic parts," Somple said. "There is an awful of effort underway to try and replace metal parts with plastics, and we will have people with strong background in both who can bring unique solutions to the marketplace."

"We understand how the parts are used and understand their tolerances," said Dwalin DeBoer, an 11-year Mack employee promoted to head the new unit. "We understand the specifications for the parts and, in some cases, are the only manufacturers of these parts."

Because Mack has sheet metal, machine and plastics capabilities, "we can help customers cut costs, and design the products that work best," she said. "It gives us a lot of options" on how to develop the best solutions for orthopedic markets.

To further boost its orthopedic business, Mack is doubling its laser-welding capacity, as lasers are used to put brackets into cases and trays for orthopedic surgical case and tray market.

"We will have another laser welding cell operable by the first week of March," said Somple. The cell will use a Litron Series 30 Welding system that can laser weld the brackets that hold the surgical instruments in the trays. The self-contained system produces a hermetically sealed weld bead free of gas, air and contaminants.

Mack, which has approximately \$300 million in sales, derives roughly 40 percent of its business from medical. It has 1,800 employees in 10 locations. The company operates 126 injection molding machines ranging in size from 28 to 4,000 tons of clamping force.

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