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Each month, we recognize one of the region's top manufacturers with the aid of *nepirc*, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center. Since 1988, *nepirc* has been working with manufacturers to improve their productivity, profitability, competitiveness and long-term viability through consultative services.



Tioga County manufacturer growing domestically and abroad

From a manufacturing facility about 50 miles northwest of Williamsport in Wellsboro, Tioga County, workers at MetalKraft Industries, Inc. manufacture parts for the auto, lawn and garden, appliance and recreational vehicle industries by molding metal powders and heating them to just below their melting points.

MetalKraft has been using powder metallurgy technology since 1983 when its founder, Wayne Singer, quit his job at another metallurgy plant to launch his company. At the time, MetalKraft was a one-man operation.

Singer's company grew steadily, operating at first from a manufacturing space just outside Wellsboro until 1990 when Singer moved operations to a 30,000-square-foot plant. With continuing growth, expansions to the plant were made in 1993, 1995 and 1996, bringing the company's building to its present 50,000 square feet.

The number of employees at MetalKraft has also grown over the years from the one-man operation in 1983 to 49 full-time employees today, according to Singer's son, Aaron, who has been president of the company since 2000.

"We offer integrated computerized manufacturing systems that enable us to be efficient throughout the ordering, production and shipping process. Our commitment to innovation allows us to offer 'job shop' service, with the added benefit of high-volume capacity," Singer said.

Speaking about efficient operations, Singer said his father turned to the Northeast Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center in the late 1980s and early 1990s for help with QS9000 certification, which today is referred

to as ISO. That training and implementation of quality standards helped MetalKraft continue its path of growth and was key to allowing the company to remain competitive throughout recent years.

"All industries experienced drops in sales during the recent recession, but it was our quality standards implemented during our early years with NEPIRC that helped us make it through this period much stronger than many of our competitors," Singer said.

When the company was founded, less than 10 percent of MetalKraft's business was with the auto industry. By 1990, that percentage had increased to 25 percent, and today, 55 percent of MetalKraft's business is with the auto industry, Singer said. "We picked up many new customers after 2009 just because of how strong our company remained during the recession," he said.

Another area of growth for MetalKraft is exporting. Because of the company's expertise and precision manufacturing, some customers that build their products overseas are using MetalKraft to manufacture parts and then shipping them overseas for final assembly. About 10 percent of



MetalKraft Industries' manufacturing facility in Wellsboro, Tioga County.

MetalKraft's products are exported to customers in Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Italy and the Czech Republic. Domestically, MetalKraft's customer base is primarily east of the Mississippi River.

Looking forward, Singer said his company is considering

possible acquisitions of companies that would diversify MetalKraft's offerings for its customers. And the company will continue to seek ways to make improvements to best practices through participation in programs and training offered by NEPIRC.

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