



LEADERSHIP POSITION

FACILITY, TECHNOLOGY AND TALENT INVESTMENTS ARE THE REASONS WHY HATCH STAMPING CONTINUES TO EXPAND AS AN AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE PROVIDER. **BY ERIC SLACK**



HATCH STAMPING HAS EIGHT MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER LOCATIONS.

Founded in 1952, Hatch Stamping Company has taken a leadership position as a manufacturer of highly engineered metal stampings and assemblies for the automotive industry. Having created an innovative, technology-driven organization, Hatch Stamping makes parts exclusively for the auto sector.

"This business has been built by understanding customer requirements and looking to be a solution provider from design to production," President Dan Craig says. "We want to provide all of their stamped metallic needs

so they don't have to source services from multiple providers. Vertical integration and investing in technology has helped us achieve growth."

STRONG FOUNDATION

The company has more than 700 employees in eight manufacturing and technology center locations. Hatch Stamping has a presence in Michigan, Tennessee and Mexico, with 500,000 square feet of manufacturing space. It currently has 42 stamping lines, 39 welding cells, 38 robots and three e-coat lines.

Hatch Stamping's capabilities have continued to evolve over the years. The company offers stamping, welding, engineering, assembly and other services to the marketplace.

Its footprint includes a facility dedicated to technical innovation where it can build its own assembly equipment, transfer systems and progressive dies. This helps Hatch Stamping take a collaborative approach to its work with customers and allows it to engineer, design, build, integrate, program and troubleshoot on projects.

Hatch Stamping is also regularly

evaluating and implementing new technologies, such as 3-D printing, laser scanning, linear transfer and laser welding. This helps Hatch Stamping manufacture automotive parts using many materials, including stainless steel, aluminum and ultra-high strength steel. It also is critical in the company's effort to shorten time-to-production and enable high-quality results.

Ultimately, the company's technology, innovation and experience help it to utilize its expertise on a wide variety of applications. Hatch Stamping can provide solutions for customers in need of roofing, fuel systems, chassis systems, interior structures, braking systems, seating and a wide range of other segments.

"We focus on a number of segments within the automotive market, typically homing in on metallic parts that are complex, highly engineered and require extensive value-added services," Craig says. "The idea is to add more value to the customer than just being a contract manufacturer. Our growth has been centered around taking on the difficult and highly engineered products."

CONTINUED GROWTH

Physical expansion is helping Hatch Stamping expand its global footprint and position itself close to its customer base. It recently opened a 106,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Portland, Tenn., and it will open another facility in China in 2016.

"When you examine the evolution of the automotive industry, a lot of growth is taking place in the Southeast U.S., Mexico and China," Craig says. "We are following the industry, and we feel that our expansion efforts have been into geographical places for us to invest."

The Tennessee plant just opened in April. Hatch Stamping is working on bringing new business into that facility and getting it up to high capacity utilization. As for the launch of the China operation, that is slated for first-quarter 2016. The company will be working on setting up the operation and business structure there for the balance of this year.

"The automotive industry has become global, and our Tier 1 and OEM customers are operating around the world," Craig says. "High inventory levels, in-transit inventory or long lead times are not desirable. There is immense pressure within the industry to serve these companies and their plants and operations regionally."

One of the ways Hatch Stamping has stood out in the industry is by pursuing its growth organically. This has allowed the company to develop operating and manu-

facturing systems that are standardized and consistent at each of its operations. It has also implemented a web-based ERP system that allows it to centralize and monitor key performance metrics.

In the years ahead, Hatch Stamping will continue to grow its business along with its customer base by creating ties to those companies that value the services it provides. Recruiting and retaining talent has been and will continue to be a high priority for the company throughout its footprint. "The staffing challenge is an industry issue, so we are increasing our focus on recruitment, apprenticeship programs and community involvement so we can have access to a large talent pool," Craig says.

Although organic growth is more difficult than growth through acquisition, Hatch Stamping will continue to focus on building on the traditions it began more than 60 years ago. "Our fundamental guiding principle is to respect and protect the rights of all the individuals we interact with, including customers, employees and suppliers," Craig says. **mt**

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