



Dan Streufert (left), director of information technology, and John Madden, director of sales, discuss the expansions and upgrades at MedPlast Inc.'s rubber and thermoplastic component manufacturing plants during the Medical Design and Manufacturing West Show in Anaheim, Calif. Check out more coverage of the show on page 6.

RPN photo by Brad Dawson

## MedPlast gets upgrades

By Brad Dawson  
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TEMPE, Ariz.—Medical component manufacturer MedPlast Inc. is investing in plant and equipment upgrades at several facilities to better meet robust demand in the health care market.

MedPlast recently completed production

and tool room expansions at its West Berlin, N.J., site. The company put in a 6,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing area for two-shot molding capacity, and has moved several pieces of new equipment into the space in the past month, said John Madden, director of sales for the Tempe-based rubber, silicone and thermo-

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plastic molder.

MedPlast also has redone its entire tool room in West Berlin. That project includes a \$1.5 million investment in tooling equipment, such as high-speed CNC machining centers and EDM machines with robotic tool-changing capabilities.

The upgrades also included new paint, floors, ceilings and lights, he said.

The company has invested in plant and equipment improvements at its Elkhorn, Wis., facility—which specializes in rubber and liquid silicone injection molding—as well. The company, which is in the midst of the second part of a two-stage project, has rebuilt dedicated manufacturing space and added white room capabilities in two areas, according to Madden.

Those rooms will house several new molding machines when the second stage of the upgrade is finished, proba-

bly during March, he said. The Elkhorn plant molds gum silicone and liquid silicone, and also utilizes rubbers such as EPDM and polyisoprene.

MedPlast also is about three-quarters of the way through a renovation project at its Tempe facility, slated to be done within about 60 days, Madden said. The company poured all new floors and will add a 6,600-sq.-ft. clean room with the rest of the factory white-room manufacturing, he said.

Finally, the firm is changing the layout of its Westfield, Pa., plant, making it 100-percent clean room production, Madden said.

The total cost of the expansions wasn't disclosed.

The company has one other plant, in Monticello, Iowa. It employs about 800 at its five locations, which span a total of about 375,000 square feet. Madden said the manufacturer doesn't need additional people with the expansions because it still has a lot of available capacity.

While the Elkhorn facility specializes in molding silicone and other rubbers, the other four primarily do thermoplas-

tic molding, Madden said. The company does two-shot molding with thermoplastic elastomers and performs insert molding and overmolding with plastic, glass, titanium and aluminum.

Other services at the MedPlast sites include custom material and compound development, in-house prototyping, fabrication and assembly.

MedPlast is poised to build the health care portion of its business, which now represents more than 70 percent of its annual revenues, Madden said. Its products include two-shot handheld products for diagnostics, sealing systems for endoscopic devices and silicone duckbills, he said.

Upgrading and expanding facilities has been a top priority at MedPlast since it was formed in April of last year. Baird Capital Partners, a Milwaukee-based buyout fund of United Kingdom-based Baird Private Equity, bought Engineered Rubber and Plastics Group from Wayne, Pa.-headquartered Applied Tech Products along with K&W Medical Specialties Inc. of Westfield, and the businesses were combined to create

MedPlast.

Reaction to the new organization has been favorable, Madden said, and one advantage has been that many of the changes have been invisible—mostly systems and paperwork. The bulk of the work force, plus sales people, engineers and general managers, is the same.

"The only real changes have been at the senior executive level, and those people all have 25-30 years experience in the plastics business," Madden said. "We view that as a positive."

The new management team looked at all of the facilities post-acquisition and made a plan outlining where it wanted the firm to be in five years, Madden said. "They're putting the infrastructure in place to support that growth," he said, with the current goal 20-percent revenue increases annually.

"The new owners are investing in the company and addressing our plants and equipment," he said. "We've given the people better tools to work with. And with the clean rooms and additional investments, it brings the plants up to the next level."