

Room to Grow

Baker adds 3-D manufacturing, new client industries and fourth plant to its Macomb County operations

By Mike Scott

In 1992, brothers Kevin and Scott Baker started the company Baker Duplicating in the heyday of the tool and die age in Michigan. Roughly 25 years and a couple of rebranding efforts later, Baker Aerospace Tooling & Machining, Inc., now employs about 225 employees in four plants totaling over 218,000 square feet of space in Macomb Township.



Today, Baker produces tooling and parts for the aerospace, aircraft, and automotive industries. The company has also expanded into 3-D printing, scanning and services using five 3-D plastic and two 3-D metal printers. The new technology has allowed the Baker to combine the use of 3-D printing and traditional manufacturing for hybrid components and tooling.

It wasn't always easy though. Like many manufacturers, Baker had its share of struggles in the mid-2000s before and during the height of the Great Recession. That's when company leadership decided to diversify beyond the automotive industry.

Baker's clients include a number of automakers and other Tier One suppliers, but in the coming months they plan to change the name to Baker Industries to reflect the diversity of their capabilities and the industries they serve.

"Today we are essentially 50-50 in terms of serving the automotive and aerospace industries," said Rachel Burke, Baker's director of marketing. The demand for 3-D printing is growing and Baker recently added clients in the healthcare, appliance, and agriculture industries, too.

Macomb County has been a perfect location for Baker because of the deep pool of talent in engineering and manufacturing. It assures Baker has the most experienced employees on the payroll. Macomb Community College has also been an ideal resource for technicians and provides training programs for current employees.

The county also has plenty of room for businesses to expand, which fits Baker's needs as a company that has roughly doubled in size over the last decade.

"In many other areas of metro Detroit that kind of major expansion might not have been as probable or easy without moving locations multiple times," Burke said. "We still have room to grow."

Several county and state programs helped Baker with financial incentives as well, such as the Personal Property Tax Abatement and the Tool & Die Recovery Zone Act, state and



Baker Aerospace Tooling and Machining, Inc. has expanded into 3-D printing.



Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel receives a plaque 3-D printed out of metal and plastic materials. From left to right: Kevin Baker (CEO), Mark Hackel, Brian Baker (CFO), and Scott Baker (President).

local programs which helped Baker to more easily afford expansion efforts and additional corporate investments.

Kevin and Scott Baker still privately own the company and have made a commitment to the community where they live and work. Baker hosted high school students in October 2015 for the countywide celebration of manufacturing and plan to participate in 2016 as well. The company has also sponsored the annual Sprint & Splash Festival of Races each June in Macomb County and the Macomb Township parks and recreation department. **M**

Photos courtesy of Baker Aerospace Tooling & Machining, Inc.

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