

THE FLASH

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SUCCESS UPDATE: ASYST TECHNOLOGIES LLC

In 1991, Forward Wisconsin took its trade show booth and a group of economic development professionals to the National Plastic Exposition (NPE) in Chicago to promote the state's business advantages to the plastics industry.



During NPE, a contact was made with an interested business executive from ATF, Inc. of Lincolnwood, Illinois. ATF is a producer of plastic and metal-engineered cold-formed fasteners and components. Forward kept in regular contact with the firm for several years.

In 1996, ATF, Inc. and EJOT Holding GmbH & Co. of Bad Berleburg, Germany founded a joint venture called ASYST Technologies. The joint venture soon needed a new location and executives in the firm developed a strong interest in the Kenosha area. Forward Wisconsin, Kenosha area development officials and the Department of Development worked with the new management at ASYST.

The business decided to move its facilities to the Business Park of Kenosha and in 1997, ASYST broke ground on a 42,000-square-foot building and operations were relocated from Lincolnwood to Kenosha in early 1998. The total project cost was \$7 million and the initial employment was about 30 people. ASYST is a full service supplier of custom injection molded products, manual and automated assembled components, and the design and build of custom automation equipment.



Since their original move to Wisconsin, ASYST has enjoyed steady growth and now employs 63 in its facility. In addition, the company now finds itself in need of additional space for its Automation Division. Established in 2003, the Automation Division provides the local manufacturing industry with high quality automation, packaging, and inspection systems. Due to increased demand for custom automation, the company will begin construction on a second Kenosha facility that will be the new home for their Automation business. Plans are well underway for the construction of ASYST's second manufacturing plant, which will be located across the street from the current facility. The new plant will be a 38,000-square-foot manufacturing facility consisting of approximately 10,000 square feet of office space and 28,000 square feet of production space.

Initially, ASYST's new facility will start with approximately 20 employees and is expected to grow to 40 employees over the next several years. Ground breaking took place last month and operations are scheduled to begin in September of this year.

ASYST Technologies is an active member in the Kenosha community. In addition to supporting the plastics program, and the youth apprenticeship program, their employees have been active in the Kenosha Area Business Alliance Mentor program, the Kenosha Community Health Care Initiative, and local charities. They attribute their success to their talented employees and their on-going commitment to customer service and continuous improvement. ASYST has attained ISO / QS certification and provides its customers with expertise in product design, prototype development, and production. Congratulations to everyone at ASYST Technologies on their success!

STATE RANKS FIRST FOR BUSINESS INCUBATORS

According to the Milken Institute, a California-based research group, Wisconsin is the number one state for business incubators per 10,000 businesses. Wisconsin currently has more than 30 business incubators located throughout the state. Incubators typically provide technical assistance, conference rooms and other shared services for start-up businesses. Ideally, as the companies grow, they create jobs and investment and "graduate" to their own facilities or larger space.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- CoreNet Global Summit
May 15-19 in Chicago
- BIO 2004
June 6-9 in San Francisco
- U.S. Bank Championship in Milwaukee Event
July 23 in Brown Deer
- PGA Championship Business Development Outreach
August 12 & 13 in Kohler
- International Woodworking Fair
August 26-29 in Atlanta

Contact Forward at 608.261.2500 for further information

