



Maclean engineering & marketing co. limited

1000 - 6th Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario Canada N4K 1H1

MacLean Engineering expects to add to workforce after purchase of Ottawa firm



Posted By DENIS LANGLOIS, SUN TIMES STAFF
July 17, 2008

Two days after an Owen Sound factory announced significant job cuts, another local plant has sprinkled a glimmer of hope on the city's manufacturing future.

MacLean Engineering has acquired the Ottawa- based firm Kanlan, which designs and manufactures tractor and utility vehicle attachments. Kanlan's production line will now move to the Owen Sound plant. It is expected to be in operation in November.

Mike Denomme, MacLean Engineering's vice-president of diversified products, said the acquisition will mean more jobs at the city plant. Exactly how many is still unknown, he said. "There will be some job creation," Denomme said in an interview Wednesday. "It really depends on how aggressive we are on the marketing of these products."

MacLean Engineering's acquisition will officially close at the end of the month. Denomme said the number of new positions created by the new product line will be known in August. It could be several, he said, if the line enjoys healthy sales.

The positive manufacturing news will likely be little comfort to the 104 employees of Tenneco Canada Inc., who learned Monday they will lose their jobs by September as part of a permanent staff reduction at the Owen Sound plant.

Telephone: **(519) 370-2999** Fax: **(519) 370-2992**

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The Tenneco job loss is blamed on General Motors' decision to reduce production of light trucks and SUVs.

Owen Sound Mayor Ruth Lovell said the loss of manufacturing jobs is disappointing, but she is hopeful all the employees will quickly find work at other city plants. Perhaps the MacLean expansion will result in opportunities for the displaced workers, she said. "That would be the best of all worlds if that happened," she said.

Manufacturing is Owen Sound's main source of employment. The sector accounted for 16.1 per cent of the city's workforce in 2007.

MacLean Engineering employs roughly 40 people at the Owen Sound plant. MacLean bought the 50,000- square-foot former Parker-Hannifin building on 6th Street East in December.

MacLean manufactures municipal vehicles which, with the proper attachments, can plow sidewalks and maintain streets and grounds. It also makes frames for the company's mining vehicles.

The newly acquired Kanlan line will include attachments for the municipal vehicles, such as snowplows, sweepers, mowers, water tanks and asphalt heaters. Kanlan used to be contracted by MacLean prior to the acquisition. "This strategic purchase will allow MacLean to manufacture attachments for the MV as well as the opportunity to supply attachments for other types of vehicles," the company said in a statement.

Denomme said MacLean has sold 12 municipal vehicles since January and continues to bid on tenders from municipalities across Canada.

Article ID# 1117956