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# Windsor Business

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PHOTO BY RODNEY L. DENIS

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## COVER STORY

**Local mold maker Mark Goggin is growing his business despite a downturn in the industry.**

**BY RON STANG**

**I**n an industry that has felt its share of pain over the last couple of years, mold maker Mark Goggin's business is a shining success on the local, national and international scenes.

According to the **Canadian Association of Mould Makers (CAMM)** the Windsor area has lost some 15 to 20 mold makers as the auto industry has gone through a wrenching restructuring, affecting all manner of suppliers and support industries.

But of some of the firms not only survived, but in fact thrived. Some that continue to expand include Goggin's companies: **Concours Mold Inc.** of Windsor, **Denken Tooling Centre** in Lakeshore and **Concours Mold Alabama Inc.** in the United States.

In 1994, after he had learned his trade at **Active Burgess Mould & Design** over 16 years, Goggin struck out on his own, a not uncommon career move for skilled local mold makers.

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# Mold maker continues to diversify

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He started Concours in 1994 in a 4,000-square-foot building down the street from Concours' present location on St. Etienne Blvd. The firm then moved to the current site, starting at 7,000 square feet, with five expansions bringing it to 50,000 square feet. The business also went from two people to more than 200. Along the way the company started another firm on Jutras Drive in Lakeshore, Denken Tooling Centre. In 2003 it built the Alabama plant to serve the growing auto industry in the American southeast.

Now Goggin is planning to expand once again. But this time he'll combine Concours and Denken's operations in a new 100,000 sq. ft. building to be located either in Windsor or just outside the city. "For efficiencies it makes sense that we're all in one new facility," he said. Meanwhile the company is opening an office in NingBo, China, to serve automakers in that country.

The business specializes in making plastic injection molds for front and rear fascias, or bumper assemblies, for a variety of traditional Big 3 and foreign manufacturers. On display in Concours' lobby are several colorful examples - fascias for a 2009 Nissan X-Terra, 2008 Dodge minivan, 2007 Mazda Tribute, 2007 Mercedes AMG, 2007 Toyota Tundra and 2007 Dodge Nitro.

Goggin attributed the compa-

nies' growth to several factors.

One is the fact Concours purposely targeted large molds that would require 100,000-pound size tools to make them. "There aren't a lot of shops that can build a 100,000-pound tool in the city," he said. Denken (named after the first letters of the names of his sons' Dennis and Kenny), on the other hand, concentrates on smaller and medium-size tools.

Having the 100,000-pound size tool also allowed the company to compete with Asian mold manufacturers, "because right now they're not competitive on that size tooling due to shipping costs and timing." So, he said, "that eliminates the competition" on the larger tools.

But keeping on top of an ever fast-changing industry has been key to its growth.

"The last three years have been very challenging," Goggin said. "We've totally changed the way we do business. And probably next year we'll change it all over again." The firm also saw the handwriting on the wall three or four years ago for the auto industry. "So we concentrated on improving, lowering our costs and shortening up the time to build a mold," he said.

Goggin said key to riding this turbulence has been the company's staff, whom he credits as being some of the best workers in the business. "When you have 250 employees all working like they own the place, that's our ticket, that's what makes us successful," he said.

The company, in its constant search to improve best practices, rotates employees among different plants and departments. There are weekly meetings to "talk about the different procedures, the different styles we have at each facility, and find out what are the best practices and implement those at the other facilities," he said.

With the expanded facility, to be in place by April 2009, will come an expansion of the types of tooling as well as diversifying into non-automotive business. Goggin said moving beyond the auto sector is vital because the local economy "needs to be diversifying more." As well, at the new plant all the product try-outs will be done in-house. They are currently outsourced.

It appears Goggin's business is doing largely what it needs to do to meet challenges.

Dan Moynahan, president of CAMM and owner of Platinum Tool Technologies in Oldcastle, said those firms that are thriving are the ones willing to make new investments to produce faster and cheaper, and who have created for certain product segments. "You need to have a niche today," he said. He also said firms have to focus on the Asian car market because the Big 3 share has been eroding.

Ultimately, Goggin said, his employees like the challenge.

"It's tougher," he said. "But we've got to give the people here the life of challenge. It forces us to be a little smarter and to work a little harder." **WB**