

Plexus gets Kirby Lester contract

Counting company picks county manufacturer

October 18, 2008

BY LONG HWA-SHU Special to the News-Sun

Kirby Lester L.L.C. of Lake Forest, a leader in counting technology, has awarded a multi-million-dollar contract to a Wisconsin electronic company with a manufacturing facility in Buffalo Grove to make its counting machines.

Until recently, Kirby Lester had contracted a Lowell, Mass., company to manufacture its machines, used primarily in the pharmacy industry in counting pills. It switched to Plexus Corp., an award-winning contract manufacturer of electronic products headquartered in Neenah, Wis.

"It's a perfect fit for us," said Steve Burke, chief operating officer who also doubles as chief financial officer for privately-held Kirby Lester. "For us the Buffalo Grove plant is a lot closer. It's just nine miles from us instead of 900 miles(from the Massachusetts location) ," he pointed out.

"It saves on transportation cost," he added.

Burke declined to specify the amount of the contract except to say it involves the production of hundreds of counting machines. Kirby Lester commands the largest share of automatic tablet/capsule counter sales in the United States and Canada.

The machines in 10 models are sold in 30 others countries. The company said it recently sold two counting machines to the White House Medical Unit. While the machines are used primarily in counting pills and vitamins, they are also used to count pearls in Australia, almonds in California and corn kernels in Iowa.

"With Plexus' proven successes in high-tech industries, I am confident that this relationship will help Kirby Lester further develop and bring to market exciting and advanced technologies in the near future," said Gary J. Zage, Kirby Lester president.

Plexus's Buffalo Grove facility was recently named one of the "Chicago's 101 best and brightest companies to work for" by the National Association of Business Resources.

Kirby Lester moved to its new 15,000-square-foot headquarters in Lake Forest from Stamford, Conn., 1½ years ago. It employs 50 people.

"It's a lot cheaper to operate here than Stamford, basically a New York suburb. And we're also closer to many of our customers," said Burke.

Kirby Lester L.L.C. of Lake Forest, a leader in counting technology, has awarded a multi-million-dollar contract to Plexus Corp. Plexus Corp., which has a plant in Buffalo Grove, has been awarded the primary contract to manufacture Lake Forest-based Kirby Lester's counting machines .

