

Exclusive: Long-time manufacturer refocused, looking to hire

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The owner and former CEO of a Dayton manufacturer came out of retirement this year to retool his company.

T. R. Morton is back at the helm of Industrial Fiberglass Specialties Inc., which does business as FiberSystems, and is looking to hire as many as eight people for a variety of production, technical and marketing jobs.

FiberSystems makes fiberglass reinforced, corrosion resistant products such as pipes, fittings and duct work that are used in industrial and utility settings. Its specialty is complex engineering to make those products work properly in the field. The company also gets hired for design work and fixing issues with existing systems.



Morton's ability to get traction on his new plan could mean a resurgence for the company, which now has a handful of people and been fighting to rebound in recent years.

FiberSystems sells to industrial users and water utilities across the U.S. and does some work in Canada, but Morton is getting away from the water utility market because buyers are mostly contractors who are searching for the lowest price. He's now got the company focused on doing work for industrial end-users like Monsanto, DuPont, American Electric Power and First Energy.

Morton also is pushing FiberSystems' emergency response production program, or ESP, to address failures in the field. Getting distributors to better sell the program — fixing the mess made by other companies, because of product or engineering failures — is helping fuel a new jump in business.

Long history

FiberSystems launched in the late 1970s, but its roots can be traced to another company that goes back to the 1940s. It currently spans 90,000 square feet across two facilities in northeast Dayton.

Morton said sales were growing at an annual rate of 40 percent by 2008, when it hit 140 employees. Then, the bottom dropped out after the Presidential election. In the political fallout, Morton said many customers canceled orders and FiberSystems went from five-month backlog to less than a day's worth of orders.

Many competitors have since closed up shop, but FiberSystems continues to roll on and has landed some high-profile deals.

The company was involved in making the piping system for the World Trade Center memorial fountains. It also has a long-term contract as one of two companies supplying new heat-resistant manhole covers for utility company Con Edison in New York City.

“We’re truly a specialties company,” said Tim Morton, production manager and the second of three generations working at FiberSystems. “There are very few things that we can’t do.”

A few years ago, FiberSystems tried to break into the unmanned vehicle industry. Although it showed promise, the work never materialized.