



**Benny Sieu**

**Victor Baez looks over a new addition at Triangle Tool Corp., which is adding 18,000 square feet to its headquarters.**

By Joe Taschler And Megan Hupp

Posted: Mar. 28, 2009

That some small businesses are growing and expanding in a recession is not a surprise to David Clark, a professor and chair of the economics department at Marquette University. Smaller companies are often nimble enough to move in and grab market share, especially when larger firms in their business sectors are retrenching in the downturn, Clark said.

Others, such as Milwaukee-based Triangle Tool Corp., are simply out of room.

With six new pieces of equipment purchased since 2006 and a seventh machine on the way from Germany, Triangle needs more space. The company is adding 18,000 square feet to its existing 155,000-square-foot headquarters, 8609 W. Port Ave. The City of Milwaukee will issue \$6 million worth of bonds for the project because the city's Redevelopment Authority considers the expansion a redevelopment of blighted space.

The expansion will allow the plastic mold builders to do more business, said Victor Baez, technology sales manager. Triangle did more than \$47 million in sales last year, and the company expects 2009 to yield similar results.

Baez said the company's business has stayed strong in the slow economy. Unlike many of its competitors, Triangle does not do work for the automotive industry, which has been in a prolonged slump.

Triangle has hired nine new employees to operate the machines, which will be housed in the expansion, and the company expects the addition to be fully operational by June.

"It solidifies job security for those who are already here because it's highly skilled employment," Baez said of the addition. "It allows us to be more productive with what we have."

While Triangle doesn't expect the addition to contribute to more than 15% of its future business, Baez said it gives Triangle room to perform more rush jobs. The more rush jobs the company takes on, the more overtime it pays its workers, and Baez said, "overtime is king for our employees."

The company has about 190 employees between its Milwaukee and Melrose Park, Ill., divisions.

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