

## More than 100 full-time positions created locally in past 12 months

Halla

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"We had two choices then," explained Allen. "We could either close the doors or find another customer to supply. Fortunately, we were able to get a contract with Ford Canada to supply parts for the Mustang and that really turned things around."

In the beginning, the parent company, Halla Climate Control Korea, would ship air conditioning systems to the College Street facility for assembly before they were sent to Hyundai.

With the addition of Ford to the customer list in 1992, and General Motors in 1997, Halla opened its second home, a 140,000 square foot manufacturing facility on University Avenue. A third facility has also been added; a 50,000 square foot warehouse at the old Corby Distilleries location in Corbyville is now being used to house raw materials and finished goods.

The company's growth has

also provided a huge boost for the local employment market. From 20 employees in 1989, Halla now boasts a team membership of approximately 700.

"We were pretty much an assembly line when we open in 1989," said Allen. "Now we cover everything from design to manufacturing, and our team members are directly involved with the whole process."

Allen said the move in recent years to a team environment has improved both working conditions and job satisfaction at Halla.

Teams are made up of 10 to 15 people with everyone rotating through each position at their assigned station.

"It all revolves around team work," he said. "They are self-directed teams which gives everyone more control of their work environment and the people here have a lot of ownership in what they do. It allows them to be more flexible."

While the people at Halla may be top notch — their product line does well too.

From the meager beginnings as

an assembly operation, Halla now supplies several air conditioning components. They produce both steel and aluminum accumulators — reservoirs for the coolant — for the entire Ford vehicle line.

In 1997 they began to manufacture components for GM to supply air conditioning to the rear of large SUVs. Their efforts were rewarded with the GM Supplier of the Year award — an honour they would win again in 2000. That occurred after Halla started to produce under-body lines to carry the refrigerant to the rear air

conditioning units. Halla is currently under consideration for the award for the third time.

Allen said Halla's engineering has played a large role in expanding the company's product lines.

"We've added more engineering capabilities over the years," he explained "It's allowed us to make several product enhancements which, in the end, saves money for the customer. They demand quality products, timely delivery and competitive pricing, and we are able to meet all those criteria."