

# Northern Electric

By JACK EVANS  
Staff Reporter

New production lines and new markets mean Belleville's Northern Telecom complex, already the giant of manufacturing industries in the Quinte area, is preparing to flex its muscles again in 1985.

Northern is now one of the great success stories in terms of world manufacturing and the Belleville plant, although only a small cog in the corporation's now sprawling world operations, has played a major role.

It was here that the company's famous SL-1 private branch exchange telecommunications switchboard was pioneered, later converted to a fully digital operation and went on to become the world-wide success it now enjoys in more than 40 countries around the globe.

Continuing research has meant constant upgrading to the plant's bread-and-butter line, expansion into both larger and smaller models and increased flexibility to hold a commanding lead in world markets.

Production lines were implemented in recent years with the Displayphone, a product which got off to a slow start when first introduced about two years ago - but now coming into its own as an internationally-accepted communications and information tool.

Also coming into full production within the past two years is the printed circuit board plant, set up in premises leased from the former American Optical plant just a few hundred yards away from the main Sidney Street plant.

An announcement made just a few weeks ago signals the start of a whole new era at Northern in Belleville, opening up production lines in the the automated office equipment line.

It bodes well for a plant whose work force has grown considerably in the past few years to

record levels of more than 1,650.

Further work force growth is unlikely in view of more modern production methods and the introduction of increased technology such as robotics.

Alan Lytle, marketing director, sees continued optimism for sales of Northern Telecom products in the months ahead - with special excitement about prospects in China. A delegation from China, visited the plant in recent months for an introductory tour. Mayor George Zegouras was

among those who greeted the visitors during the trip.

But the sales field remains highly competitive, Lytle cautions. For that reason, all members of top management are particularly sales oriented and that includes Ian Craig, divisional general manager. Top management members travel extensively to add thrust and direct input to major sales transactions.

Teamwork remains a major part of the plant's daily operations, says Lytle. Most ideas and decisions are the result

of small teams of four or five people.

Plant safety remains a major platform in the company's operations too. It has the best safety record of all plants in its category for all Ontario, racking up several million-hour accident-free records and even a two-million-hour record in recent months. Employee participation in safety is being fostered by a company pledge to donate \$1,000 to the charity of employees' choice for every one million accident-free hours.

BELLEVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
223 PINNACLE ST.  
BELLEVILLE, ONT. K8N 3A7