

Cercor spells success to three partners

This is a success story. From three partners starting a foundry in a double garage in Georgetown, Cercor Inc. has expanded into an international company with eight plants around the world.

Barry Hadley is one of the three founding partners who remembers the early days of the firm. Started in 1964, the company operated in a garage where the McDonald's Restaurant now stands, on Highway 7, Georgetown.

It used to be called "Mid-Canadian Castings Ltd.", a name Mr. Hadley chuckles over today and calls ridiculous.

"If you're selling your product in the U.S., and it says 'Canadian', they

don't want it," the general manager said, pointing out over 85 per cent of the company's products are now exported to the States.

Today, Cercor is located next to Hunter's Country Restaurant on Mountainview Road North, in a modest building about 30,000 square feet.

It's in this building that a staff of 100 make what's called "investment castings" of aluminum or bronze. What that is is high precision parts for computers, packaging machinery and aircraft.

"Our biggest customers are in the United States," Mr. Hadley said, naming some - Texas Instruments,

IBM, McDonnell Douglas. Originally selling in Canada, the company's American sales started to pick up through trade shows, to the extent that Cercor now has three U.S. plants.

"Outside of Japan, we're the biggest company," Mr. Hadley said of the castings firm.

In Canada, Cercor does work for Northern Electric, Westinghouse and General Electric. During a tour through the plant, Mr. Hadley pointed out the small bronze doorknobs his company makes, as well as the small round locks that are on pay phones across the country.

The method the foundry uses to make these bronze and aluminum parts is a process thousands of years old, used first in China. Today, however, the company has computers, overhead conveyors and a robot to help it along.

All of the parts Cercor makes are highly precise, within thousands of an inch, and so critical that they are X-rayed to be sure there are no flaws in the castings.

"If you happen to break the piece that holds the wing (of a plane), it's more than frustrating," Mr. Hadley said, indicating the potential danger.

Customers not only get the parts they custom ordered, but also the X-ray film which proves there's no flaw, from Cercor.

Clean air

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recommendations on how to cut back on emissions.

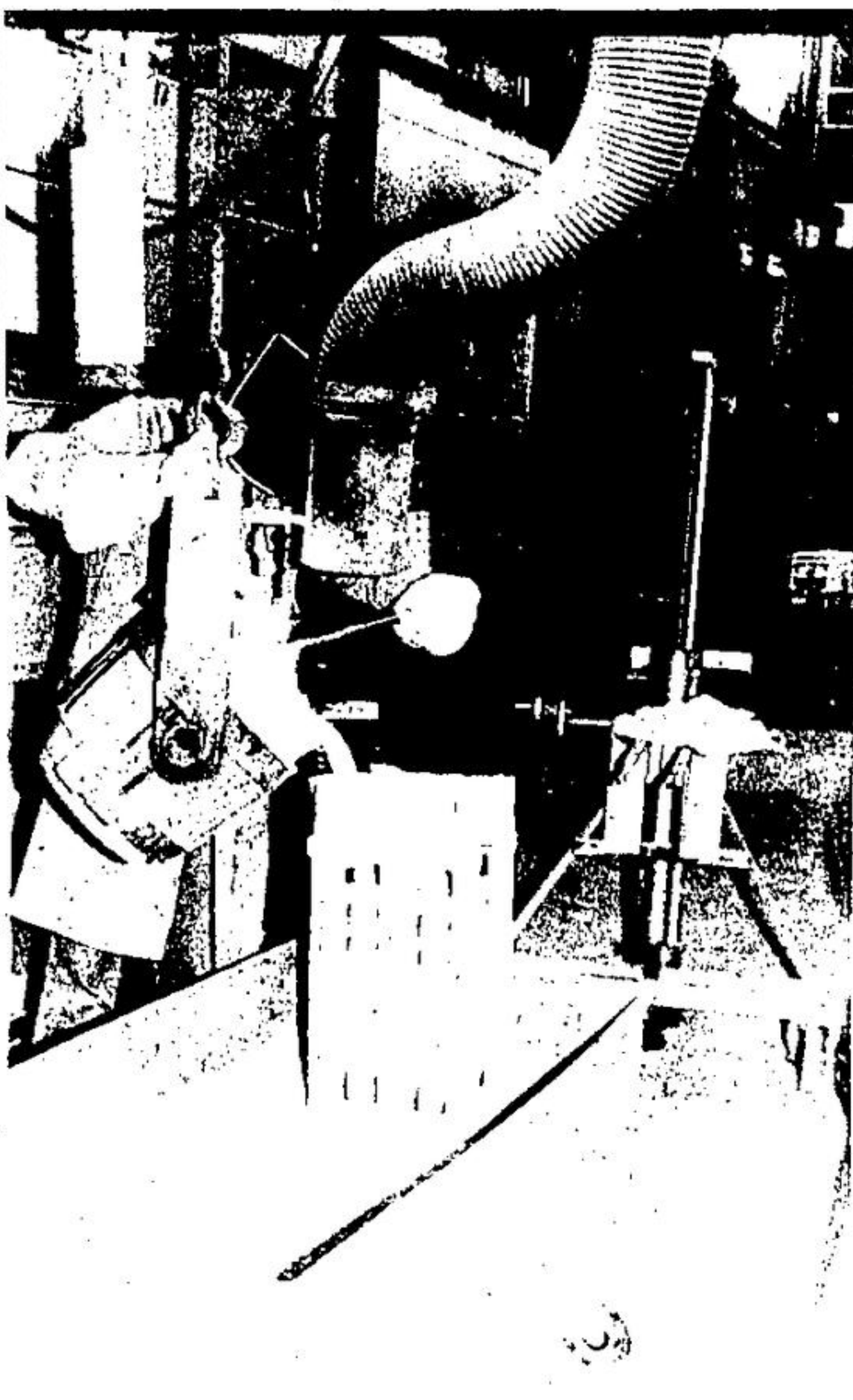
As a member of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee Mr. Baynes supplies technical expertise on whether or not an energy from waste plant is feasible. He concluded that such a project could work and a final report will be available in March.

Mr. Baynes sees Georgetown as an ideal location for his business not just because of the location of his clients but he likes the lifestyle. "When you're in a business that has a rather hectic pace it's good to escape to a town that is slower-paced," he said.

"I just hope that nobody is going to change it. I think that there are pressures in that direction from developers and the town council," he added.

While the recent recession took its toll on many businesses, CJB Associates has seen a pretty steady flow of work. "There has been a shakeout in the business in the last two or three years. People have been departing. There has been a slight increase in business in the last year but nothing significant," he said.

While Mr. Baynes has no plans for expansion in the immediate future the current trend towards an expanding economy could eventually lead to more business. But air pollution, regardless of economic trends, is something that will always be Colin Baynes' concern.



This stuff is hot, and Frank Bhagwandeem doesn't take any chances with it. Caster at the Cercor foundry

In Georgetown, Frank is pouring molten bronze into a ceramic mold. (Herald photo)

Ten years ago, the company joined up with a Montreal company called Cer-Cast Corporation, and that's when they adopted the Cercor name.

Having gone through three expansions on Mountainview Road, Mr. Hadley doesn't expect there'll be any more. Efforts are now turned towards a new plant in Spain.

How is a casting made? Mr.

Hadley opened the door into the plant's work area and pointed out the injection molding machines which make a wax pattern. This wax shape is then dipped into a vat of liquid ceramic nine times by a robot, and given a spray of sand after each dip. These nine coats make a ceramic mold. You don't need the inner wax anymore, so that's very thoroughly melted out.

Into this ceramic mold then goes the molten bronze or aluminum, and voila, you have a casting.

This is an industry which schools haven't really trained young people for. Mr. Hadley said individual companies provide the training.

It's proud of his staff and attributes the success of the firm to his employees' attitude.



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