

Created and manufactured right here



What's there

- The CCMI manufacturing facility, purchased from a foreclosed bank in 1994, includes:
- ▷ A machine shop
 - ▷ Engineering room with three computers
 - ▷ Shipping department
 - ▷ Receiving area
 - ▷ Fabrication department
 - ▷ Production department
 - ▷ Washing parts department
 - ▷ Paint booth
 - ▷ Warehousing department upstairs
 - ▷ Solvent tank to clean dirty parts of machines for repackaging
 - ▷ Reception area and two main offices
- See www.ccmi-reedco.com for more information.

Gabrielle Plucknette photos / Finger Lakes Times

Anthony Lewis (left), owner of CCMI, looks at a part that head machinist Roger Goodnough is working on at the plant in Geneva. At top, Charlie Parmalee molds and shapes plastic.

If you need it, CCMI of Geneva will design it and build it

By DAVID TAUBE
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GENEVA — Order a deli platter at Wegmans and you'll probably see a plastic meat tray manufactured locally.

Buy a Quick Draw lottery ticket at a gas station, and its plastic holder may be made in Geneva.

CCMI Inc., a plastics manufacturer, operates an 8,200-square-foot facility with nine employees in your backyard on 88 Middle St. Clients like Wegmans Food Markets, the New York State Lottery, Corning Inc. and Mercury Aircraft order specially made products like food displays, window and guard components for kiosks, and never-before-made airplane parts.

"Everything we make is custom," said Anthony Lewis, 28, who took over the business from his father in 2003 and now is acting president. "Each day is different. Each product is different."

Wells "Skip" Lewis, his father, founded the company in 1991 after working as a manufacturing representative for 20 years.

"Based on his geography, he constantly ran into the need for off-the-wall, custom products in low volume," Anthony said.

CCMI has about 100 clients and produces thousands of products each year, Anthony said. The company can make as many as 10,000 products for a single order or as few as one.

One recent order was for Goulds Pumps in Seneca Falls, which needed a fully operational water pump to train students and customers.

"There's only three of these in the world," Anthony said.

Value added

CCMI stands for Create, Construct, Manufacture and Invent. The acronym comes from the four words that define the word "fabricate" in Webster's Dictionary. The business specializes in packaged, ready-to-go products for clientele as far as Texas and Canada.

"When you receive it as his customer, it's all ready to go," Wells said. "Many companies don't want to do that because it's too hands on."

CCMI added three new pieces of equipment in February, which included:

- ◆ A five-axis CNC router that allows workers to trim a three-dimensional object in three dimensions.
- ◆ A compressed air system.
- ◆ A new dust collection system.

In the last six months, CCMI also revamped its single station vacuum former.

The piece of equipment allows workers to give shape to plastic, three-dimensional components by applying heat and pressure, a process called thermoforming. Previously, the vacuum former was used as an additional service. Now, it's a piece of production equipment.

The various equipment allows the business to carve out a niche in the industry for fabricated plastic products, thermoformed components, and value-added services such as full assembly, including electrical and mechanical machining, parts washing and remanufacturing of plastics components.

"A lot of places can't do that," Wells said. "They can only prefabricate it or thermoform it. That's it."

Niche clients

In the early 2000s, Wells considered retirement, but his youngest son, Anthony, a 2002 graduate of State University College at Buffalo, wanted to keep CCMI as a "family business." Anthony started working for the company in November 2003 in sales and business development.

The business then made strides to "get out of the Dark Ages," as Wells said, by purchasing a three-axis CNC router about a year later.

"We were just killing ourselves with labor," he said. The company dropped about four employees, Wells recalled. "That was sad, but that's the way it went."

CCMI also purchased computer design software around that time that included AutoCAD and ArtCAM.

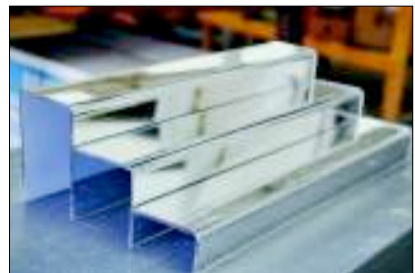
Nowadays, the business plans to diversify in other markets such as the alternative energy and health care industries.

Jerry Keeler, a business development executive for Mercury Aircraft in Hammondsport, is a satisfied customer who appreciates CCMI's proximity.

"Whenever I need a project done, they're one of the first people I call," Keeler said. "[They're] easy to work with and convenient to have in our backyard."

Wegmans, however, remains CCMI's largest customer. The company recently produced a see-through food bin that displays buns and rolls at the grocery chain's stores. The unique design allows customers to see the food products from almost every direction, and holes in the bottom of the display allow crumbs to be hidden.

"Wegmans sells the sizzle to the steak. They love glitter. When you walk into their places, they shine," Wells said. "And that's what we're capable of supplying to them."



At left, Roger Goodnough works on the 3 Axis CNC router machine at the plant in Geneva.

Above is a plastic shelf to display liquor bottles that CCMI created and produced.