

Encon expansion to create 8 new jobs

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

An official of Energy Converters Inc. (Encon) in Dallas Township says a \$115,000 loan from the Luzerne County Business Development Loan Program will help the company to continue its growth and to add eight new jobs.

The company, which makes electric heating elements for various industries, will use the loan to buy machinery and equipment to expand its operations.

John Lloyd, Encon's vice president of operations, gave three reasons for the company's application for the loan.

"We are looking at diversification, automation and to keep our operations environmentally safe," said Lloyd.

Lloyd said that the company, located along Lower Demunds Road, expects to achieve even more success with the new equipment and more manpower. Eight new jobs are expected to be created through the expansion.

"If we can continue to diversify then we can avoid some pitfalls," said Lloyd. "If we can serve more industries more effectively then we won't be as susceptible to seasonal downturns."

Lloyd said that new equipment that will be purchased through the loan offers a lot of potential to the company. "We are facing great competition from southern states and around the world, so we have to continue to make heating elements more efficiently than in the past," he said.

The new equipment will also support the company's commitment to environmental safety. "We have always been committed to running an environmentally sound business," said Lloyd. "We

The company makes heating elements used in a variety of applications

don't want to be a detriment to the environment whatsoever."

Lloyd said that the company has put \$48,000 into a degreasing system in which some of the elements are cleaned with materials other than chemicals. "This way we do away with all the hazardous chemicals," he added.

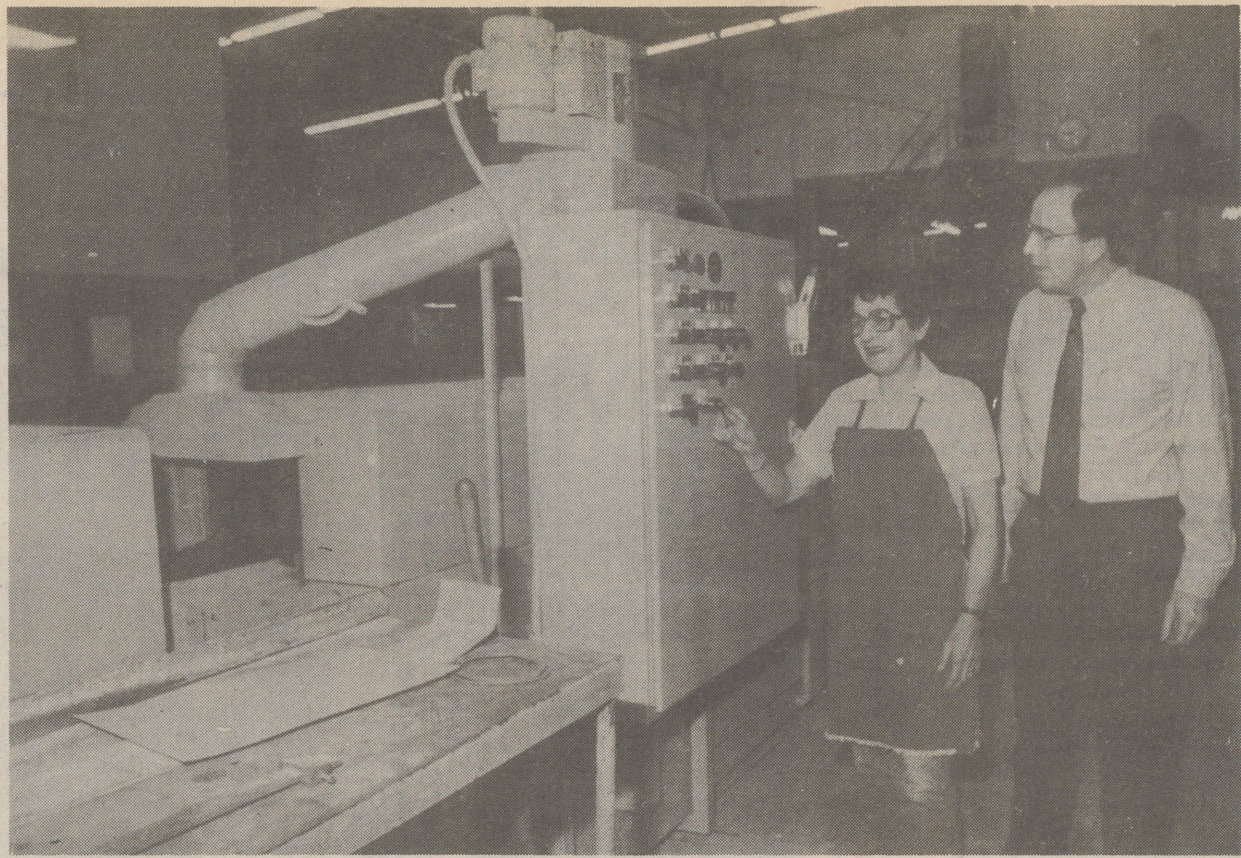
Even though the company is purchasing new equipment for its expansion, Lloyd said that the biggest reason for the company's continued success is its workforce.

"We have approximately 200 employees here and they have a work ethic that I have never seen before," said Lloyd.

"We started from nothing 17 years ago and have shown some growth every year," he said. "The credit for this must go to the work force. The employees are outstanding and committed to making us grow."

Lloyd said that Encon began serving electric heating industries but has since branched out. Finding these new opportunities is another reason the company needed to expand. "We have had to look at other things and diversify," said Lloyd. "As we do this it requires new machines, skills and employees."

Encon has recently gained new customers in the area, one of them the Proctor and Gamble Company in Mehoopany. Lloyd said that



PRODUCTION THAT'S ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE - John Lloyd looks on as Marcella Cupinski of Dallas works the degreasing machine at the Encon Plant in Dallas Township. This machine washes the electronic heating elements produced by the company without leaving hazardous chemicals for the environment. Lloyd said that this is one of the reasons the company was able to obtain a county loan for an expansion project at the plant. (Post Photo/Rich Johnson).

Encon will be making large heating tunnels which will be used for the Proctor and Gamble assembly lines.

A stove-top heating element is another new area for Encon. The element, known as Euro-burner, can be used on stove-tops to replace older burners.

Lloyd said that this product has a lot of benefits, including its aesthetics and its cleanability. "In a matter of seconds you can replace these burners with the old burners and virtually have a new stovetop," he said.

The element, which has been out for about one year, has been

popular in Canada and is starting to catch on in the U.S., according to Lloyd.

Most of the company's clients are outside of the area but Lloyd said that the company is satisfied with its location. "We don't have many customers in Pennsylvania but we are bringing in money from other areas and our employees are hopefully spending in this area," he said.

Lloyd said that as the expansion at the plant continues, so will the company's dedication to employees. "We are purchasing the equipment now and as it is installed we are expecting to create new jobs and keep a steady workflow

throughout the year."

Lloyd believes that the work force is very close and that creates a positive atmosphere at the company. The ties that bring them together were shown recently when five employees from the company were called to duty for Operation Desert Storm.

"Some of them were called here at the plant and before the day was over we had a little send-off for them," said Lloyd. "People at the plant really showed a spirit of patriotism and pride."

"All-in-all I have to say they should be given a lot of credit and a pat on the back for all they've done for us," he added.

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The local division of Project Children is sponsored by the Donegal Society of Greater Wilkes-Barre.

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