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## ***Mechanical Sales' future expansion to come with engineered systems***

by Wendy S. Clark

Mark Morris, president of Ralston's Mechanical Sales Inc., has seen the future of the company and believes its growth in large part will be in engineered systems.

The idea behind engineered systems is a reduction in the installation time required on a job site. Building owners purchase customized, complete and ready to install systems rather than individual pieces of equipment.

The commercial and industrial heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems are designed and finalized at a factory rather than at the site, thereby reducing installation time dramatically.

Morris said that factor was critical when Lincoln's Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center expanded its operating area.

The installation of the cooling, dehumidification, heating, humidification and filtration system required the hospital to shut down its surgical area, an event its management wanted to last as short a time as possible.

Mechanical Sales, an independent manufacturer's representative for HVAC systems, worked on a team with the owner, consulting engineer and contractor to provide the engineered system.

It provides 45,000 cubic feet per minute of fully conditioned air to the area.

Designed and finalized at the Governair factory in Oklahoma City, it was shipped to the job site on seven semitrucks and the large components were pieced together.

"Surgery was shut down Friday, and on Tuesday it was back in operation," Morris said. "Conventionally, it could have taken 30 days to complete, at least. This was done over a long weekend."



**Morris, at left, with Wieseler next to the cooling tower the company provided to Children's Hospital ... The future growth of the business will come largely through engineered systems.**

He said over the next few years he expects engineered systems to become an increasing portion of Mechanical Sales' business.

"Our customers are asking about it, and it's our job to introduce it to customers, too," Morris said.

Mechanical Sales has added staff to support the engineered systems effort.

Morris said the company has been on an inclining growth pattern over the past five years, largely fueled by the strong economy. Mechanical Sales' industrial division has benefited most from the pattern.

The division works with industrial facilities to provide air, water, steam and filtration systems.

With the manufacturing boom subsiding, those customers are putting capital expenditures on hold, Morris said.

He said Mechanical Sales, which has 20 employees, has seen a slowdown over the past six months but is not letting it create much downtime.

"Our industrial division has remained very busy helping customers identify opportunities to improve their facilities, so when the economy improves and our customers'

capital budgets become available, projects can move forward," Morris said.

"We also have performed many process water cooling and treatment projects, which allow our customers to recirculate water instead of dumping it down the drain after using it once."

The health care, education and government markets have remained strong for the company, said Morris and Bill Wieseler, chief executive.

"We also have been active helping consulting engineers with layout for projects that will be bidding in the near future," Morris said.

Mechanical Sales, whose roster of projects includes 70 percent new construction work, recently has handled projects such as the First National Tower, Millard Public Schools, the Omaha World-Herald's Freedom Center, Methodist Hospital's HVAC upgrade, a Nebraska Furniture Mart expansion, the new hospital in Columbus and two new high schools for

Lincoln Public Schools.

A large part of its operation is service. Wieseler, who has been with the company since 1983, said the service aspect of the operation makes it a more than 40 hour a week job for some managers.

"We're here 8 to 5, but after hours and on the weekends we get caught up," he said. "It takes a unique individual to do this for a living."

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