

## **Aero Gear starting Windsor Expansion**

By Howard French, Journal Inquirer

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Aero Gear Inc. is beginning a multi-year, multi-million dollar expansion that will add dozens of new jobs at its Windsor base over the next few years, company officials said Wednesday.

The company said it expects to begin construction of the first phase this month — a \$3.25 million, 16,000 square-foot expansion — with a planned opening in October, according to a statement from President Douglas Rose.

“This first phase alone represents a 25 percent expansion of our facility,” Rose said. “Of course, with the expansion of the building, we will need to grow our workforce.”

He added that the company has “about a dozen job vacancies. The expansion will create nearly two dozen more jobs, he said.

“The company is seeking machine technicians and individuals with a variety of other manufacturing skills,” Rose said.

Aero gear makes specialized gears and gear assemblies, primarily for aircraft engines.

“In recent months, our company has won a number of new long-term contracts for the manufacture of aerospace components,” Rose said. “However, another key reason for the expansion is an increased demand for our design and components-testing services. We also are continuing to expand into the overhaul and repair segments of the aerospace industry as we see a major jump in demand for these services in coming years.”

The second phase of the expansion of Aero Gear, scheduled to begin within three years, calls for adding 20,000 additional square feet of manufacturing space to the Windsor factory, according to Rose.

“With continued strength in the aerospace industry, a third phase would be initiated a few years thereafter and would include about 25,000 more square feet, primarily of manufacturing space,” he said.

“Ultimately, the three-phase expansion should boost employment from the current 130 people to more than 200,” Rose said.

Rose said Aero Gear is committed to remaining and “growing” in Windsor, “despite opportunities presented to us for expansion in other regions.”

He added, “Windsor has demonstrated that it is eager for business to grow here.” He said there is a “wealth of talent in the Windsor area, a pool of potential employees we hope will be interested in joining our expanding team.”

Rose said that he sees major growth coming from two areas: new types of military aircraft, and the demand for a variety of replacement parts as existing aircraft continue to age.

The company started in 1982 with a single employee. It supplies products for most major aircraft engine makers, including Fairfield-based General Electric, East Hartford-based Pratt & Whitney, and Britain’s Rolls-Royce, as well as aircraft makers such as Chicago-based Boeing Co. and Stratford-based Sikorsky Aircraft.