

TEYA VITU

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A major maker of plastic medical products will fill an 85,000-square-foot industrial building on the South Side and eventually bring 150 jobs to Tucson.

Moll Industries expects to open for business with 40 to 50 employees by the end of the year, said Ron Embree, the company's president.

Employment should grow to 150 in two to three years, Embree said.

The move is an outgrowth of a Moll Industries acquisition in February of InteSys Technologies of Donegal, Ireland, which included divisions in Empalme, Son., and Costa Mesa, Calif.

The Costa Mesa operation will be relocated to Tucson, Embree said.

"I think Tucson is more conducive for manufacturing," Embree said. "The property values are lower, the property taxes are lower, the utility charges are less. The labor force rates are a little better."

Embree has not worked out salary ranges for Tucson and is not seeking employees yet, but he said Moll will offer "competitive wages."

The Tucson facility, the former NexPak Corp. building at 6270 S. Country Club Road, will have a 5,000- to 7,000-square-foot sterile clean room to make medical items, such as dental products, IV products, syringes and contact lens cases.

Tucson will have one of Moll's three clean rooms, with the others in Donegal and Seagrove, N.C.

About 40,000 to 50,000 square feet will be devoted to other custom plastic injection molding jobs.

Dallas-based Moll Industries is a private company that does not divulge income. Embree said revenue is between \$100 million and \$200 million a year.

Embree said Moll ranks among the top 12 injection molding companies that are not tied to the automotive industry and is in the top 25 when including those making automotive parts.

Moll has 1,200 to 1,500 employees at the above facilities and other plants in Fort Smith, Ark., New Braunfels, Texas, La Vergne, Tenn., Lexington, N.C., and Monterrey, Nuevo León.

Moll Industries found Tucson through the Arizona Commerce Department, which forwarded the company to the Greater Tucson Economic Council, which now has been absorbed into Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities Inc.

The TREO team helped the company find the Country Club location, said Kendall Bert, the Tucson agency's senior vice president of business development.

"It's great to get manufacturing in here," Bert said, reflecting on the huge decline in manufacturing in Tucson and nationwide. "It's good to have a company of that stature here."