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Clarks Summit manufacturer growing its die casting business

Having worked in New York as an equities trader for 15 years, John Kane was already very familiar with risk when he quit his Wall Street job to return home to Lackawanna County and purchase a small manufacturing company in Clarks Summit.

It's only been about nine months since Kane and his wife, Leah, who at one time had a career in New York developing strategies for Fortune 500 companies, purchased Elecast, an aluminum and zinc casting company.

Sitting at a conference table in their office, Kane described his new career in manufacturing as challenging but exciting. He has learned much about the die casting industry in the short period of time he and his wife have owned the company. "I have tried my hand at pretty much all of the jobs here but I think I make some of the employees laugh and they probably think I should stick to the front office," he said.



John Kane holds a bar of aluminum that will be melted to make the die-cast parts.

Elecast was founded in 1988 and had two owners before the Kane's purchased it. The last owner had owned and operated the company for more than 15 years and wanted to retire, Kane said. "We did our due diligence for more than a year before we made an offer for the company. Elecast had some clients that have been around for many years so we felt comfortable that we could take over and then work to expand our client base slowly.

Just nine months after purchasing Elecast, the couple are already starting to see growth in their business and expect to grow by at least 20 percent in 2016.

"We wanted to first make sure that our client base was satisfied and that they knew that the transfer to new ownership would be seamless. The employees are the same and the customers were very happy with Elecast's products and timely delivery," Kane said.

Elecast die casts parts for customers in various industries including furniture and medical component manufacturers. "We can make parts for any business that needs them," he said. The

company has customers throughout the northeast, but also has some clients as far away as Texas.

Kane said he believes some of Elecast's future growth will be through the reshoring of manufacturing back to the United States from abroad. "Years ago, many companies moved their manufacturing to China because it was less expensive. Today, companies are looking to return manufacturing to the United States because it's easier and more convenient to work with domestic companies. They also have a lot of concerns about lead times, intellectual property and the supply chain," he said.

Even though Kane had no experience with the die casting industry, he has a strong business background. He graduated from West Point Military Academy and served in logistics in the Army for five years. He then earned an MBA from the College of William and Mary before taking the job in New York.

His wife graduated from Lafayette College with a degree in economics and business and is using her experience at the New York advertising agencies to market Elecast's services.

While the couple has experience that helps them on the financial and marketing sides, they sought out manufacturing assistance and have been working with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center. The Kanes have participated in NEPIRC's Consortium for Process Excellence and Innovation events, a membership group that meets up to six times a year for events including focused company tours, special workshops and topic and focus group discussions.

"NEPIRC has been an amazing resource for us. They provide a lot of services for small manufacturers and I'm sure we will be working with them a lot more in the future," Kane said.



John Kane shows some of the aluminum parts Elecast manufactures for its clients.

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