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UCT's patented coating, control processes secure its place as an industry technology leader

UCT Coatings, a metal plating firm based in Stuart, has been providing high quality finishes for metal parts since 2000. The company's patented coating technology, custom-engineered surface solutions and high-volume production capabilities have attracted a global customer base, a roster of quality certifications, governmental and third-party approvals, and end-user endorsements.

In the early 1990s, UCT (formerly Universal Coating Technologies) developed EXO, a formulation of nickel boron that delivers an unprecedented balance of hardness and lubricity. When applied to metal parts, EXO reduces friction, extends service life, enhances performance, and lowers maintenance costs for components used by industries such as automotive, government/defense, forestry, marine/maritime, oil and gas, small arms and tooling.

But durable coatings are just one part of the business. The company also has separate R&D, application development and production capabilities and a team of metallurgists, chemists, scientists, engineers, and technicians to help customers find the right solutions to their component problems.



Beginning January 2011, the company will transition to its state-of-the-art Palm City facilities, which will offer one of the largest lines with the highest quality controls available in the industry worldwide.

Unlike other surface engineering and metal finishing companies who simply buy coating chemistry from large suppliers, UCT has invested far above the industry standard in engineering, science and operations. This has paid off with a loyal customer base that regards UCT as a low-risk company that produces valuable, legitimate technology. As a result, components coated with UCT technology are in use or in development all over the world.

“Unfortunately, our field is often associated with poor and inconsistent quality,” Chief Technology Officer Yancy Riddle said. “Some companies fear technical and quality audits, but we invite them. Our process controls are second to none and we are very proud of that.”

In fact, UCT’s process controls are the most advanced in metal finishing. Around 90 parameters are measured, controlled, and documented throughout the processes including chemical mixing, chemical processing, coating qualities and heat treatment. These controls are derived from UCT’s strong intellectual portfolio, which is powered by an active R&D program staffed with knowledgeable in-house experts and resourceful outside partners.



UCT Coatings’ products and services are widely applicable across many industries that seek increased engine efficiency, operational performance, fuel savings and corrosion control.

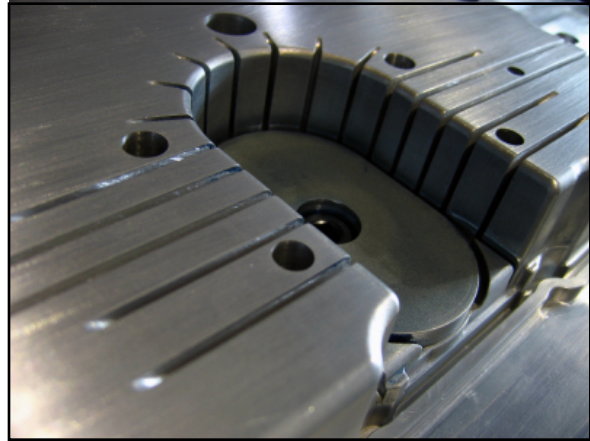
However, it’s not enough to have patents alone, Riddle said.

“Our trade secrets set us far ahead of the pack in critical ways, mainly with the time required to make an idea a large-scale production reality,” he said.

UCT’s existing patents cover both the core coating technologies they develop and, in some cases, the use of those coatings in innovative ways. For example, it has patents and patent applications related to the removal of lubrication on weapons, design

of critical equipment for the forestry industry and on its nickel boron coating technology.

Dennis Duke, director of advanced programs at Rolls Royce Naval Marine in Walpole, Mass., has been using UCT coatings to protect marine propellers and propulsors since 2004. The two companies are working together to develop a coated composite material.



“UCT doesn’t sell coatings, they sell solutions,” Duke said. “They sit down with the customer and find out what they have in mind. They won’t just slap a coating on a part. I’ve had a good relationship with them over the years and plan to continue working with them in the future.”

Coatings provided by UCT can help tools achieve higher performance requirements, extend tool life and protect them while in storage.

UCT performs all pre-treatment, coating, and finishing operations at its ISO-certified Stuart facility. The facility is equipped with a medium-capacity, manually operated coating line that can accommodate most conventional coating work. Beginning in January 2011, the company will transition to its state-of-the-art Palm City facilities, which will offer one of the largest lines with the highest quality controls available in the industry worldwide. The Business Development Board of Martin County helped UCT secure permitting for the new facility and is helping Dr. Riddle locate critical resources for employee training and retention.

Dr. Riddle said the company decided to stay in Martin County because the business climate is changing for the better, thanks to the efforts of the BDBMC, other BDBs, and the state to improve the visibility of the county’s technology sector.

“UCT will continue to grow its surface engineering services, broaden its product offering and, with our new Palm City facility, establish an industrial name synonymous with high quality, excellent customer service, capacity, and technological leadership,” he said.