



Northern Lakes
ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Central Lake Company Receives Multi-Million Dollar Defense Contract

Article Courtesy of The Antrim Review - Vol 7 No. 2, August 13, 2009: The Central Lake area received some really good news last week when Armor Express Body Armor announced that they have received their first direct contract from the Department of Defense.

Said President and CEO Matt Davis of the multi-million dollar contract, "The contract is an indefinite delivery/open-ended agreement. We will be making ballistic panels for the Marine Corps for the Corp's full spectrum battle equipment."

So far, the four year old company has received one order of 9000 panels, the CEO said. "As a result, we have hired eight full-time employees to help us fulfill that obligation. Beyond that is up to the government."

The company currently employs 81 people, he said.

With the recent loss of both Second Chance Body Armor, the company created by Davis's father Richard from which Armor Express was created in 2005, and Barnes Precision, Armor Express is now the biggest employer in the Central Lake area.

In 2006, the Central Lake company attracted the interest of the federal General Services Agency, which in December of that year awarded the company a contract to supply overseas military troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with 30,000 body armor vests.

That came on the heels of an order for 10,000 vests from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, giving the company the distinction of receiving the single largest law enforcement order in the country.

The company has also received orders from the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Like most other manufacturing facilities all over the country in the last two years, the young company was adversely affected by the failing economy, Davis said, "With almost stagnant growth in the law enforcement and corrections security arena, which comprised the majority of our work in 2008, like everybody else, we took a hit. But we're hoping this is the beginning of a turn-around."

And the company is making a name for itself in the defense world. "We are slowly and steadily gaining market share," said Davis. "Two people who will be helping us continue that include Dan Johnson, our new national sales manager who just moved here from Ohio, and Tina Case from Bellaire, who's just a couple of credits shy of a Master's Degree as a government program manager."

At an annual employee appreciation pig roast held last Friday at the East Torch Lake Drive facility, Davis said as he introduced his son Hayden, three, to his employees, "It's really all about the tremendous skill and knowledge we have in our employees. Without the help and support of our employees, we wouldn't be where we are today."

It's also safe to say that 81 residents of Antrim County might not be where they are, with a good job to depend on, and thousands of military troops, law enforcement and corrections officers across the country might not be where they are - alive, if it weren't for [Armor Express](#).