

North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce President David McKeehan says it's appropriate that the massPLASTICS trade show is held every 18 months within a spandex stretch of Leominster, Massachusetts—the birthplace of plastics in the Northern Hemisphere. In an interview available only to readers of this pre-trade show e-letter, Mr. McKeehan commented extensively on the history of the massPLASTICS trade show. He also shared his thoughts about why massPLASTICS is such a valuable venue for anyone who has any interest in plastics.

“Plastics is the largest manufacturing cluster in the region,” reflects Mr. McKeehan, adding, “it's also the largest employer. Accordingly, massPLASTICS has developed into the largest plastics show on the East Coast. One of the unique aspects is that massPLASTICS is more like a convention than a trade show. Many exhibitors have been with us since our earliest meetings; this loyalty and consistency has created an atmosphere that is conducive to networking, and conducting business. Actual business is conducted on the trade show floor; this is pretty unusual.”

The Medical Device Connection

“The plastics industry in North Central Massachusetts is a strong, complementary cluster to medical device firms. Plastics companies are highly desirable, capable outsourcing partners for medical device manufacturing, and their close proximity to many medical device firms allows for substantial partnering opportunities with leaders in the medtech industry.”

Mr. McKeehan adds, “We have a capacity in this region for precision molding, and we're trying to connect that capacity to medical device manufacturers. This is an important emerging market for our plastics companies. We have the capabilities right here in our state,” emphasizes McKeehan, “so we can keep this kind of manufacturing in America and not outsource it.”

Speaking to the future of plastics, Mr. McKeehan comments: “There's been an incredible consolidation nationally in the plastics industry, so while the number of employees is down, the output is the same if not greater. We at massPLASTICS believe that we're an important part of keeping the industry going: From our first conference in 1987 we've grown exponentially—demonstrating that there is a continuing need for a business-oriented trade show like massPLASTICS.”

As for his hopes for the show, Mr. McKeehan says, “at each show the hope is that people will gain a clear understanding that this is a very viable region for precision molding, and that manufacturers, producers and consumers can continue to look to this region for plastics solutions. This is also a good place to locate a company, because this is still a place where manufacturing matters.”

The massPLASTICS Trade Show, the largest of its kind in the Northeast, is an ideal venue to connect medical device companies with local plastics manufacturers. massPLASTICS is highly regarded for its manageable size, relative affordability, and proven track record in creating an environment in which business deals and sales are made. Held every 18 months, massPLASTICS 2011 will be held at the Courtyard by

Marriott, at the junction of Routes 2 and 31, in Fitchburg, on Wednesday, March 16, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 pm and March 17 10:00 am – 4:00pm. More than 200 exhibitors will display injection molding machines, plastics related products and services before an audience of more than 4,000 company presidents, industry sales representatives, as well as federal, state and local leaders. For more information, visit www.massplastics.com.