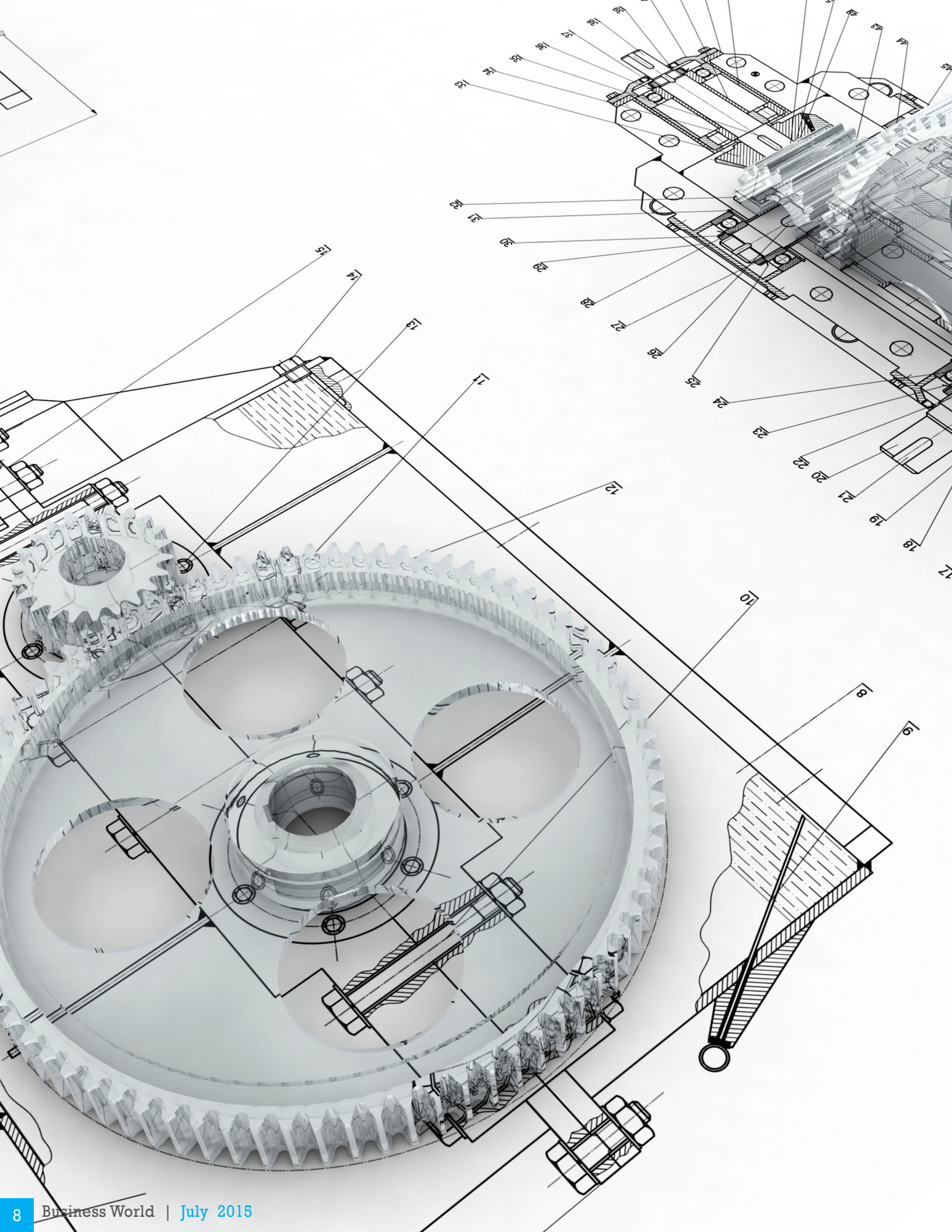
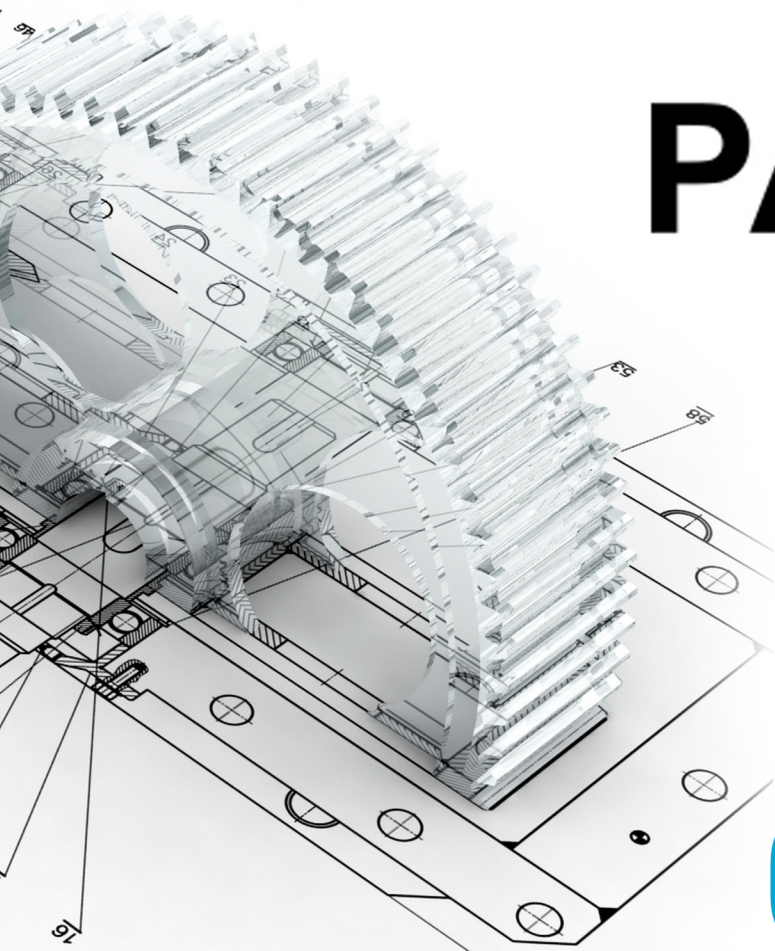


PARAGON







PARAGON

POISED FOR GROWTH

Paragon Metals is a world leading supplier of high-value, highly-engineered precision-machined components for the automotive and other industrial markets. In more than 20 years of business, they have experienced strong and steady growth globally based on the unrivalled dedication and skill of their staff.

“What sets us apart is our people,” says Tom Nichols, Director of Sales and Marketing. “Our CEO once did an interview with a local TV station where he was asked that question – ‘what sets Paragon apart from anybody

else?’ He said point blank: ‘it’s the people.’”

“He’s worked around the world,” Nichols continues. “He’s been to Europe, Japan, China, and Korea, but he said the people who worked at our facilities in Southern Michigan were the best he’d ever worked with.”

Paragon Metals was originally founded by that CEO – Michael Smith – in 1991. From the start, he had the goal of servicing the automotive market with high quality equipment sourced from China. He originally formed partnerships with several factories



over there, investing money into improving their quality management systems. At first, he acted essentially as a “broker” – clients would order parts, he would bring the parts over from China to his facility in North Carolina, inspect and repackage them, and then ship them off.

In the beginning, Paragon worked in the electrical hardware market. One of the company’s first customers, in fact, was MacLean Power Systems in Alabama – a company that manufactured products used by utilities for building transmission and distribution lines and substations.

EXPANDED SERVICE

A few years into the company’s life, in 1995, Paragon expanded to service heavy truck and industrial applications. In 1996, they established an engineering and logistics office in Shanghai, China. The year after that, they began to supply the automotive industry as a direct Tier 1 supplier. They kept growing rapidly from there, and in 1999 set up a greenfield automotive foundry in Korea in partnership with a local company, followed by more facilities in China – including Shanghai PMI Machinery in 2006, which was licensed for export operations.

In 2008, Paragon continued its growth do-

mestically in the United States. They established their very first machining facility – as well as a distribution centre – in Quincy, Michigan.

In 2012, Paragon announced its expansion in Michigan. Having already invested more than \$20 million and hiring roughly 100 employees in the area for their state-of-the-art plant in Quincy, they came up with the plan to expand in the Hillsdale area in Southern Michigan only 12 miles away. With a new 137,000 square foot facility there, they be-

came well equipped to effectively respond to the cyclical demand in the automotive industry.

Finally, in 2014, Paragon opened a third precision machining (and aluminum die casting) facility in China. Meanwhile, in the United States, Nichols says they are just about at capacity. He says they are looking at expanding their Hillsdale facility, and maybe even forming a third domestic facility in a different state.





In addition to achieving rapid growth, Paragon has also earned recognition from customers and industry bodies. Since opening up shop in Quincy, Nichols says the company has been recognized by the United States Commerce Association, nominated for the Supplier of the Year Award by Chrysler, and also received a plaque from the Charlotte Business Journal for being one of the top 50 fastest growing companies in the region.

“Since 2009, we’ve received numerous awards for precision engineering,” Nichols says. “We’ve received awards from Ford, Chrysler and GM. That’s fantastic recognition, and it all comes from simply giving the customers what they want.”

KEY PEOPLE

Today, Paragon Metals employs roughly 255 between their two US facilities – which is an

impressive jump from the 15 people they initially employed in 2008.

Nichols credits the company's continuous success to several factors. First and foremost, however, he says the company is where it is today because of its hardworking and ethical workforce.

"We have people who are absolutely dedicated," he says. "They only want to do what's best for the company. They'll work seven days a week if we need them too – and some people have worked 90 days straight without a day off. They are committed to the company and we wouldn't be here without them."

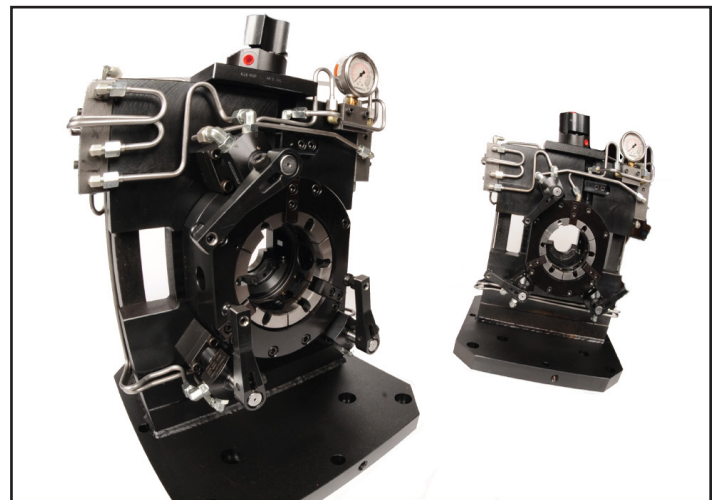
In recent years, Paragon has also hired some very talented employees that have helped the company turn a corner in innovation. In the past, they have had to purchase certain machines and part transfer applications, but they now have people capable of building those machines in-house. As an example, they have staff members who were able to build a 5000 PSI pressure washer from the ground up – a unit which Nichols estimates will likely sell for almost \$500,000.

"Our people are just amazing," he says. "I'm

impressed by them every day."

The skill of Paragon's staff has been vitally important to keeping the company at the forefront of technology, Nichols reiterates – which is another key factor that sets them apart.

"Paragon strives to deliver the components that most machines can't do," he says. "We don't look for the easiest, most simple parts – we look for the hardest, most challenging parts. Currently, for example, we're doing a



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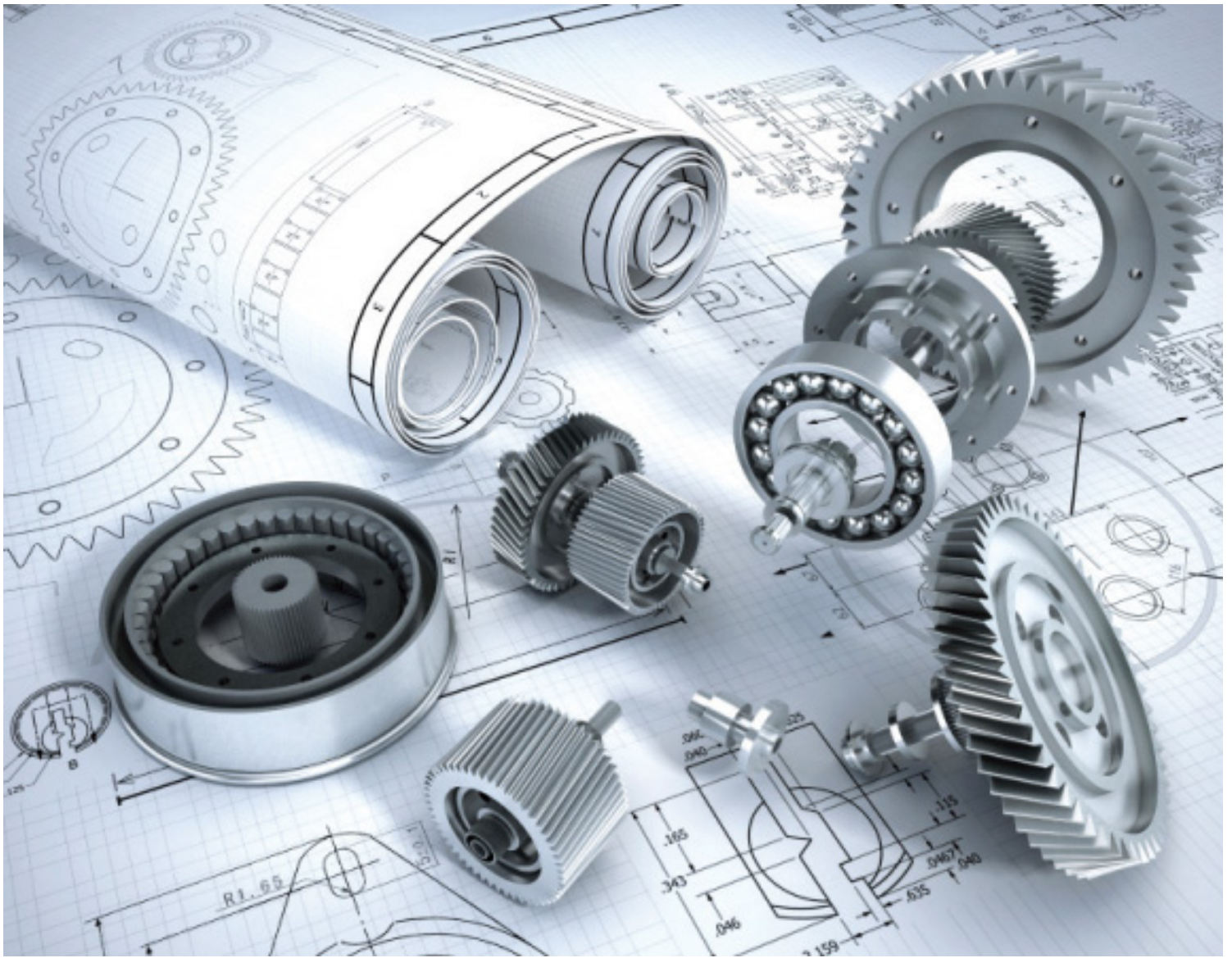


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9-speed transmission component for Chrysler. We're doing two million of those a year, and there's probably only a handful of companies that could make that happen."

Paragon also utilizes the industry-leading Plex system, which allows the company to manage and track the entire business through an electronic application. With that technology, managers can monitor the business in real time no matter where they are in the world. The technology also makes quot-

ing and ordering supplies simpler and more efficient, and Nichols says that efficiency is passed on to the customers.

The company also creates efficiency through state-of-the-art automation technologies, which they seek out and source from all over the world.

CONTINUED DEDICATION AND LOYALTY

"We want to grow our business as we've

been growing for the last three years,” Nichols says. “We want to grow by 20 per cent minimum for the next five years. We want to become a \$5 million a year sales company.” Paragon Metals is going to accomplish that, Nichols adds, by keeping their customers happy, which they have historically done an excellent job of. After all, the company’s very first customer – MacLean Power Systems – remains a customer to this day, Nichols says they aim to continue their dedication to service and continue to earn the loyalty of customers like MacLean for years to come.

At the same time, however, Nichols says Paragon Metals aims to diversify their client base. Currently, the company is mainly focused on the automotive, industrial, and heavy equipment sectors. In the future, they hope to have a stronger presence in the lawn and garden market.

Finally, Nichols says the company’s most important goal just might be to their family-oriented culture – which he says starts right at the top.

“Our CEO takes care of each and every employee,” Nichols says. “He’s a very hands-on person, and if there’s something that some-

body needs, he’ll go out of his way to help them out. He has the trust and the backing of everyone that works here.”

“Not too many companies our size were having a family picnic this year,” he adds. “It was held right on our grounds in a grassy area, and all employees had food and games for the day and a band for the evening. I organized it, and our CEO told me to spare no expense. He said the employees work day in and day out for him, so he wanted to show them a good time in return. That’s the kind of guy he is. That’s the kind of culture we have.”

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