



Foreign markets beckon firms

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• DECEMBER 11, 2009

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King Arthur's Tools, a Tallahassee company that serves customers in 39 countries, is branching into additional overseas markets and has expanded its operations locally to get ready for the increase in business.

"There is a lot of business that the island countries are hungry for from here," said company founder Arthur Aveling of the expansion to St. Maarten in the Caribbean, where King Arthur's Tools has added two dealers.

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and they are increasing their capital investment in our community by expanding their facilities," said Beth Kirkland, executive director of the Economic Development Council of Tallahassee/Leon County Inc., during a news conference and tour of the King Arthur's facility on Hartsfield Road.



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DAVE HODGES/Democrat Pamela and Arthur Aveling, owners of King Arthur's Tools, talk Thursday about the Tallahassee company's expansion in preparation for new markets opening in the Caribbean and South America. King Arthur's Tools has customers in 39 countries worldwide. (DAVE HODGES/Democrat)

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A maker of specialized wood-cutting and finishing tools, the company has expand its research, development and manufacturing space by 2,500 square feet to a total of 7,000, and hired two more employees. Kirkland said the EDC's focus on existing companies is critical because 80 percent of new jobs come from the industry base that is already here.

It was through the EDC that Arturo Lugisse made contact with Aveling, who was already exploring additional overseas markets. "When I came here and saw what he was doing, I got excited," said Lugisse, executive director of the Tallahassee St. Maarten Foundation.

Lugisse arranged for Aveling and his wife, Pamela, to visit St. Maarten, meet business and government officials, and participate in a trade show. While there, the Avelings provided the tools and materials for two schools to reinstitute their wood-working programs for students. . .