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Atotech marks a new chapter with technology centre launch

By Melanie Cummings, Special to Burlington Post

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A search of a typical household likely will uncover a connection to Atotech Canada Inc.

Those decorative door handles, forks, knives, spoons and appliances likely have been protected with the Burlington company's anticorrosion coating and plating recipes.

It's likely the same story for the shiny metal, plastic and aluminum parts on the car in the driveway.

Beyond the home front, industries in aerospace, electronics, oil drilling and the military rely on Atotech's plating technology to protect the largest and small components of instruments such as jets, rigs, computers and tanks, from deterioration due to the elements and heavy use, as well as improve their longevity.

A part of the local business landscape since 1993, Atotech recently cut the ribbon on an 80,000-square-foot technology centre — a move that follows the international company's policy of investing 11 per cent of worldwide sales into research and development.

As one of 14 training centres the 1180 Corporate Dr. facility also serves double duty as an educational destination for the 3,200 Atotech employees around the world.

The addition is a world-class materials science and analytical laboratory that is filled with \$3 million in multi-syllabically named equipment. This addition tests, creates and mixes custom blend proprietary formulas and provides production solutions and technology for a bevy of clients including AG Simpson, Magna International, Steel Mills and Flexingate.

Currently, about half of Atotech's business is derived from the automotive industry, said Gene Torcoletti, managing director for Canada. He has seen such down cycles in the automotive sector before — like the one affecting the economy of late — and is expecting a slight drop as a result this year, from 1.2-million cars annually to one million.

“We have to change with the changes and keep our focus on supplying customers' needs,” said Torcoletti who has held his current position with the company since 2005.

By ‘we’ he refers to the 57 staff employed in the lab, sales, service and manufacturing areas at the Canadian headquarters in Burlington.

Torcoletti said Atotech also places an equally important focus on developing high quality and environmentally-responsible finishes that fulfill the requirements of the automotive industry and its suppliers. For example, over the past two years the company has embarked on a worldwide effort that actively uses advanced wastewater systems, which treat the effluent from the plating line, sparing a negative impact on the local environment.