

WHEN THE RUBBER HITS THE ... (YOU NAME IT)

Hoses are just the start of what this KC company produces

HANNA RUBBER CO.

Where: 1511 Baltimore Ave.

Al Kelly, general sales manager, has worked for Hanna Rubber Co. for 39 years, but he still likes to celebrate every big sale.

"We sound this buzzer whenever we make a sale over \$10,000," he says, pressing the button on his desk that activates a "Yahoo!"

Hanna Rubber has been in business more than 80 years and, since 1992, located at the very visible corner of 15th and Baltimore. A fire destroyed a previous building on Main Street, and the company recovered quickly after a brief stint working from a makeshift factory at the CEO's house just off 55th and Ward Parkway.

"I remember packing boxes and weighing them on Mr. (James) Vandergrift's bathroom scale," Kelly says. "No one was hurt in the fire, and within 10 days we had moved into our new building."

Hanna Rubber stocks and sells tens of thousands of discrete products, but its real specialty is fabrication.

A walk through the seven-story building reveals as much. Kelly can look at an entire floor of rubber hoses that to a layman appear identical, save for the color. He knows which are radiator hoses, which are defroster hoses, wash-down hoses or dry bulk hoses. Some are air hoses, some are suction hoses. Some are even garden hoses. There are a hundred types of hoses, and he can distinguish them all at a glance.

But Hanna Rubber produces far more than rubber hoses. Each rubber product developed for a customer is evaluated in terms of its eventual application, the pressure and temperature it must endure, and of course size, among other specifications. Some products must meet FDA food-conveyance muster and others are headed to troops doing battle in Iraq. The range of rubber applications is vast.

Hanna Rubber counts the military, beer distributors and even commercial construction companies as customers. Its products are found on snowmobiles, in Costco buildings, on door seals on private jets, in night-vision goggles and even on Phalanx missile systems for Raytheon.

"We are known for our unusual and specialized products," says Scott Assyia, operations manager. "A good portion of our business comes from within a 150-mile radius, but we currently sell to most states and about seven or eight different countries. We see our online and international business as areas of future growth."

Suzanne P. Cole is a freelance writer in Leawood.

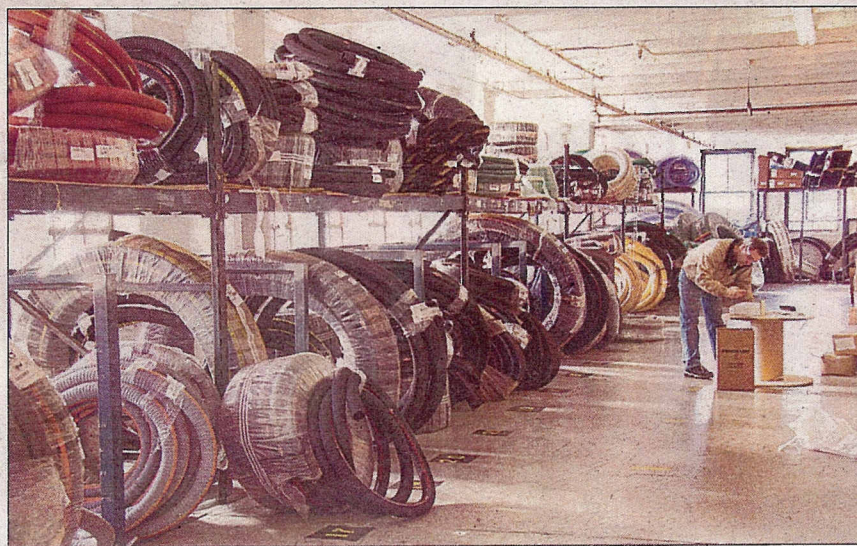
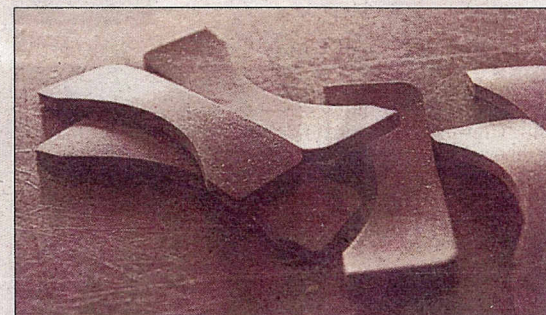


Hanna Rubber Co. has been at 15th and Baltimore since 1992, but the company has been in business since 1925.



Left: Whatever kind of hose you need, chances are good Hanna Rubber Co. makes it. These are chemical hoses.

Below: One example of the many parts produced by Hanna Rubber. "We are known for our unusual and specialized products," says operations manager Scott Assyia.



John McCall checks inventory.

BY THE NUMBERS

47 Number of states Hanna Rubber customers are in

90 Percent of metal building manufacturers that use Hanna Rubber products

60 inches Size in diameter of largest hose sold

1/8 inch Size in diameter of smallest tubing sold

30,000 Number of products Hanna Rubber sells

1925 Year the company was founded