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913

# Made right here

Johnson County has manufacturing companies — If you know where to look.

Page 24



SOR Inc. makes parts for the oil, gas and power industries. At the operation at 14685 W. 105th St. in Lenexa, assembly calibration technician Paul Rios worked on a manual checker.

## SOR

Operations Vice President Bert Benton is patient as he guides me through the Lenexa plant, picking up this metal component and that to explain its role. He's showing me "process instruments" for the oil, gas, power and nuclear industries — more precisely, pressure and level measuring equipment.

It does an injustice to the technical nature of SOR's production to say that some of their products — level switches — look a bit like the float device inside your toilet tank. But the concept is similar. They measure and control the level of liquid in industrial tanks.

"Our products measure temperature, pressure level, and flow — as in pipelines — and help people understand and control what's going on in their industrial processes," explains CEO Mike Waters. "One of our most interesting facts is that 65 percent of our revenue is generated from exports, and our single largest use market is China."

About 90 of SOR's 170 employees, including welders, machinists, assemblers and people skilled in pro-

cess engineering and the petrochemical field, work in the manufacturing part of the 110,000-square-foot building that has room to grow. But SOR already has done a lot of growing since its founding in 1946 as a small machine shop.

Eventually, it became Static O Ring, later shortened to SOR, named after its niche in making an instrument that used, you guessed it, static O rings as a key element.

Today, the factory focuses on three product lines: mechanical pressure switches, mechanical level switches and electronic instrumentation.

"All of our work is build to order," Benton says. "We've come back strong from the Great Recession. The oil and gas market is strong, and power in China is strong. We're shipping parts to Chinese power plants once a week."

How does SOR relate to you? Every time you turn on a light switch or put gasoline in your car, Waters says, you're seeing the end result of a process that SOR helped control and manage safely.

Story by Diane Stafford  
Photos by Fred Blocher