

EMPHASIS Machinery

Desma to represent Wickert in North America

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HEBRON, Ky.—Desma KDE Sales & Service Inc. has entered into a multi-year contract to represent German machinery maker Wickert Maschinenbau GmbH in North America, including Canada and Mexico.

Wickert specializes in high-end vacuum compression technology and custom machine design and construction used to mold such goods as diaphragms and pharmaceutical goods, according to Scott Early, president and CEO of Desma KDE. He said Wickert is known for its innovation in hydraulics design and posts about \$30 million in annual sales.

Informal discussions leading to the three-year, renewable contract—complete in January—began at last year's K-Show and included management from Desma KDE's parent company in Germany. "Wickert was looking for a partner in North America," Early said. "We have a stable and competent sales and support staff, and their product line just dovetails with that."

Wickert has had a small presence in North America with a few machines installed making pharmaceutical goods, with customers including a combination of rubber molders and pharmaceutical firms with internal molding capability.

"KDE will provide sales, technical service, parts and aftersale support," Early said. "This is another sales line our Desma sales company will have to provide in the right application."

He said there is a misperception in North America that compression presses automatically equate to machinery used to make commodity goods. But that's not necessarily the case, especial-



Scott Early (left), president and CEO of Desma KDE Sales & Service Inc., meets with Hans Wickert, president of Wickert Maschinenbau, at Wickert's factory in Landau, Germany. Desma KDE will be representing the German machinery maker's line, including the Wickert 2500 vacuum compression press shown here, in North America.

ly with the technology and attention to detail—particularly in the hydraulics—that Wickert puts into its equipment.

In addition, pharmaceutical components often are driven by the compounds, and compression compounds are different from injection compounds, Early said.

And with the need for Food and Drug Administration approvals for pharmaceutical goods, a company can't just switch compounds without getting the

required approvals.

"In certain applications, you can't convert a customer to injection," he said. "These compression machines are a perfect complement for what Desma sells for injection."

The Desma KDE chief said having a three-year contract shows that both companies are making a long-term commitment to the relationship, noting that there will be a lot of training involved so his staff is up to speed on the specialized machines.

KDE will service existing accounts and work to find new ones. The firm kicked off its representation at the recent Medical Design & Manufacturing West show in California, but one goal will be to identify markets other than pharmaceuticals where the machines can find a niche, Early said.

"This contract is too new to have set sales goals," he said. "The contract is not built on promise of volume. It's built for a long-term commitment to intelligently sell this product."