



Lehman Trikes expanding

\$114K loan from city will help buy more equipment for expansion

By Wendy Pitlick
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SPEARFISH — Lehman Trikes in Spearfish is continuing to expand both its equipment and its staff.

Recently the city of Spearfish approved a \$114,800 low-interest, economic development loan for the company to use to purchase necessary equipment for a recent expansion. The loan, at 3 percent interest for five years, will be used to purchase equipment such as fork lifts, trucks for moving shipments, air compressors and engineering equipment for testing existing products and developing new lines, said Lehman Trikes Executive Vice President Kennon Hines.

The company, Hines said, is expanding its warehouse to accommodate a growing market and great success.

For the first quarter last year Hines reported that Lehman showed 40 percent growth at a time when the motorcycle industry as a whole was down in aggregate by about 32 percent. "(That) is pretty darn amazing in this economy," he said. "I'd say that's a nice place to be. It's the trike, and trikes are being recognized as legitimate recreational, fun vehicles."

Lehman Trikes currently has four locations in Spearfish. Its headquarters and a warehouse are located on Seaton Circle, the company's main assembly facility is located on Industrial Drive near Premier BankCard, and the company also rents another storage space on Industrial Drive across from the Western Hills Humane Society.

That's a far cry from where the company was when it opened its doors in 2004 with just one facility on Industrial Drive.

"It sure feels good," Hines said of the expansion.

Spearfish Mayor Jerry Krambeck said the economic development loan, administered through Spearfish Economic Development Corporation and granted by the city of Spearfish, is fairly common for businesses in Spearfish, and is offered as a way for companies to enhance their services locally. The loan does not cover 100 percent of the company's costs, as the total cost for the necessary equipment was about \$126,562.

In addition to expanding its equipment, Lehman Trikes is also expanding its staff. Rilea Moyer, human resources coordinator for the company said Lehman Trikes is looking to expand its permanent and temporary staff this summer. Staffing levels, she said, are at about 140 employees right now. Hines said plans are in the works to hire another 25 people over the next three or four months. Positions are open in the paint department, technical service and

in the warehouse.

That's more than double the staff the company started with when it moved to Spearfish in 2004. Back then it had five employees. Then, as the company found more success it grew to 15 employees in May of 2005, and by 2008 that number had grown to 100 staff members.

Hines attributed the company's success to its niche market.

"In this particular case Lehman is blessed by the fact that we are in a niche market and that particular market, especially driven by our supplier relationship to Harley-Davidson ... they rolled out that (Harley-Davidson Tri-Glide trike) and it has been quite successful."

Last summer Lehman Trikes announced its exclusive contract to build Harley-Davidson's Tri-Glide motorcycle. Though the Harley-Davidson line has helped the company, Moyer said the trike market as a whole is doing very well. "I can't say (growth is due to) one thing or another," she said. "Just in general the trike market is growing. In the human resource area it makes me feel really good to still be hiring people. I am just thrilled that we are still able to put people on and still operate and keep going."

"It's a good product," Moyer said. "It's a good company. We've been real successful here."

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Courtesy photo