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DeCarolis continues growth

At 65, truck rental company is still moving in new directions.

By David Tyler
Staff Writer

(November 25, 2003) — The full name of the business is DeCarolis Truck Rental Inc., but that's become a bit of a misnomer over the years.

As the 65-year-old Rochester company has grown from one truck to 3,000, it has added long-term vehicle leasing, contract maintenance and truck and body repair — and a heavy-duty parts division.

And the company is still growing. DeCarolis recently moved its parts division into 10,000 square feet of a 24,000-square-foot building on its Colfax Street campus in Rochester.

The heavy-duty -parts expansion has freed up room in other parts of the DeCarolis complex. The parts operation used to share space with the repair shop.

"We've got a little room to breathe now," said Mark Davis, general manager of the heavy-duty parts division.

The company is also expanding its reach, as it starts to advertise in publications targeting the agricultural and municipal markets.

"Basically any business that uses or could potentially use a truck or a van is a target for us," said Robert Merlo, DeCarolis' marketing manager.

The privately held company declined to release its annual revenue. However, DeCarolis has 170 employees and seven locations across New York state.



SHAWN DOWD STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mechanic Carl Rapp sends sparks flying last week as he repairs a hydraulic lift gate at DeCarolis Truck Rental's repair shop on Colfax Street in Rochester. The 65-year-old family company continues to grow in new directions. [Day in Photos]




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The company's Rochester operations take up more than 70,000 square feet.

"When you're looking at any secrets to success ... the keys are the company staying flexible and open to change," said company President Paul DeCarolis, son of founder Louis DeCarolis Sr.

The heavy-duty parts division is one example of that flexibility, he said. After collecting parts to service its own fleet, by 1989, DeCarolis realized the possibilities in selling parts to other companies.

"For years we were strictly renting and leasing," he said.

In some ways, the company has always been diversifying. During the 1950s, the elder DeCarolis operated a truck stop and served as a dealer for Diamond Reo and Thermo King trucks. In 1967, Paul DeCarolis got out of the dealership business to concentrate on rentals and leasing. By 1980, the Colfax Street operation had a paint and collision division.

In 2000, a new Syracuse facility opened.

Many small and mid-sized trucking firms are diversifying their tactics to expand their businesses, said Doug Clark, president and chief executive of Ameriquest Corp., a New Jersey-based company that helps smaller trucking companies with logistics, purchasing and other needs. DeCarolis is a member partner of Ameriquest.

Offering good, hometown service is another way to compete, Clark said.

"DeCarolis will beat the pants off any national company when it comes to service," Clark said. "And that's how it has to be."

That attitude has won a convert in Tom Marquart, vice president of T.J. Marquart & Sons, in Gainesville, Wyoming County. T.J. Marquart uses DeCarolis' parts division to keep its own fleet running. "They come in very handy when it comes to keeping our trucks on the road," Marquart said.

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For more information: www.decarolis.com



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