



Photo by Foster's Daily Democrat, Dover, NH

*Built in the 1820's, the Essex Mill Building in Southern New Hampshire is the current home of Regal Sleeving & Tubing, where members of IAM Local 2450 manufacture electrical insulation and silicon rubber tubing products used in high-tech aerospace and automotive applications.*

## **History Worth Repeating**

**M**ills, factories and commercial ventures have dotted the banks of the Lamprey River in Southern New England since 1652, when European settlers first built a grain mill near present-day Newmarket, New Hampshire.

During the 19th century, industry and commerce flourished along the Lamprey's banks. Trading ships routinely sailed down-

river loaded with iron pitchforks, wooden carriages, leather shoes, matches and paper products.

As the Industrial Age became the Information Age, and jet planes replaced sailing ships, life along the Lamprey slowed.

One by one, the factories closed. In Newmarket, where the granite mill buildings once hummed with economic life, "For Rent" signs replaced "Help Wanted" signs.

But thanks to two for-

mer employees and a band of determined Machinists, at least one of these venerable buildings will continue to provide employment and industrial life well into the 21st Century.

Regal Sleeving & Tubing Company is the latest manufacturing business to reside in the 180-year old Essex Mill building in historic Newmarket.

Regal's workforce, all members of IAM Local 2450, produce miles of electrical insulation, sili-

cone rubber tubing and wire harnesses for use in the automotive and aerospace industry.

### **Saved from Bankruptcy**

Several years ago, the employees at Regal came close to joining hundreds of thousands of North American union members whose jobs were disappearing. The previous owners were losing money and looking at bankruptcy as the next step for the Granite State business.

Two managers at the plant, Al Ferrari and Gerry Landry, took a deep breath and offered to buy the business, which still maintained a solid, if somewhat nervous customer base.

Several months and many meetings later, Ferrari and Landry closed the deal declaring they planned to continue manufacturing in Newmarket for years to come.

"You are part of a special story in the American experience," said IAM President Tom Buffenbarger to workers and management at a ceremony at Regal.

"Your efforts here are a great example for other plants and businesses in the industrial Northeast and throughout the country," said Buffenbarger.

Success stories like Regal's, however, are few and far between. The pressure created by access to low-cost foreign labor markets and the absence of any

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Larry April  
President, Local 2450

national policy to support U.S. manufacturing has proved to be a lethal combination for thousands of business and millions of workers.

In the past four years, New Hampshire lost more than 25 percent of its high-paying manufacturing jobs.

### **Economic Lifeline**

"A factory like Regal can be an economic lifeline for a small town like Newmarket," says Larry April, president of Local 2450. "Our 50 members pay taxes, buy cars and hous-

es and make it possible for dozens of other jobs in this area to exist. The gain or loss of even a single good-paying job can have a far-reaching ripple effect."

Of the top 10 states in the U.S. losing jobs to China, as a percentage of the total workforce, five are in New England — Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont — according to a study by the Economic Policy Institute of job losses between 1989 and 2003.

"The operation at Regal is an example of the can-do spirit that helped build this country into the industrial powerhouse it is and must remain," declared Buffenbarger. The IAM members at Regal show it's possible to make a quality product and be competitive with anything made anywhere in the world."



*International President Tom Buffenbarger, left, District 65 Business Representative Dave Lowell, center, and Local 2450 President Larry April, far right, congratulate Gerry Landry, second from left, and Al Ferrari, fourth from left, co-owners of Regal Sleeving & Tubing, for keeping good jobs in New Hampshire.*