

St. Charles business now world-renowned

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Eltek International Laboratories doesn't manufacture products. And it doesn't sell them.

But it does help make them safer for everyone to use. The company is a third-party testing laboratory for internationally recognized certifying bodies.

Refrigerators, computers and televisions are just a few of the products that have parts with insulation that keep those parts functioning safely and effectively. Lab technicians at Eltek test for heat and current, and they expose materials acting as a barrier to extreme conditions, flame, voltage and voltage/water.

"We test the materials way back in the development phase," said Andrea Morse, Eltek's general manager.

Founded by Ed Van Vooren, Eltek opened at 248 Hughes Lane in St. Charles in 1987. Recently, Eltek was recognized by the International Accreditation Service (IAS) as an internationally accredited laboratory. Although it has just 14 employees, Eltek does business around the globe. The new accreditation will give the company the reputation it needs to continue to compete globally.

"On our world map in our office there are flags throughout the globe. Those flags don't represent customers; they are countries where we have clients," Morse said. "In a single week, we might have clients from Detroit, Seoul or Austria in our conference room."

When asked how Eltek employees are able to overcome any language barrier between them and overseas clients, Morse said, "The international business language is English."

Morse said Eltek has been working to further develop relationships with other certification agencies throughout the world. More accreditation means that to any certification agency in the world, Eltek meets the standard of how a laboratory and accreditation facility works.

"All the way through the management structure, through the receipt of samples, training of staff, it is a very comprehensive document," Morse said. "We've been adhering to this the whole time, but now we have international recognition. With this we have proven to follow the standard."

When David Leezer became St. Charles' director of economic development on April 1, he said his department had better be on the cutting edge of technology. He said his office would look to promote bio-tech and hi-tech industries.



Lab technician Corina Wenzara, of Eltek International Laboratories in St. Charles, performs inclined plane testing, which is a continuous containment flow across the surface of any material with a specified voltage applied. Eltek recently was recognized as an internationally accredited laboratory.

To celebrate its IAS accreditation, Eltek will host a reception from 2 to 6 p.m. Friday. Visitors will go on laboratory tours and see other electrifying demonstrations.

"I'm really excited about this. This demonstrates the success of small business," Leezer said. "They have 14 employees but have been in St. Charles for 24 years. It shows small business can also be involved in the global marketplace. This is a great example of a small company doing great things in the world marketplace."

Leezer said newly elected Mayor Sally Faith would attend Friday's reception.

"We're proud and we want to show (Eltek) off to a lot of people," Leezer said.

Morse, who has a master's degree in social work, began working for Eltek more than five years ago. She gave much of the credit for receiving the IAS accreditation to the lab staff. She said they spent more time with the auditors than any of the other employees.

"We service more than 100 projects at a time — large and small — so we can't do it without every one of the people on our staff," Morse said.

Morse said most of Eltek's employees are in their late 20s to late 30s and that Eltek's ideal employee is inquisitive and has superb communication skills and a good personality.

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