

Cadorath revs-up entry into engine overhaul market

Winnipeg facility achieves AMROC designation 'to solidify our future in the business'



By: [Martin Cash](#) Posted: 7:27 PM CDT Monday, Mar. 18, 2024

A Winnipeg company has slowly but surely been working its way up the value chain as an aerospace parts repair and manufacturing operation (that also supplies the agricultural equipment companies) for more than 65 years.

Cadorath has increasingly gained the confidence of its customers and original equipment manufacturers it works for — some of whom have encouraged the family-owned business to expand its service offering into full engine maintenance, repair and overhaul.

So it did.



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Walter Peter, senior inspector technician, tears apart a Rolls Royce 250 C20B helicopter engine at Cadorath, in Winnipeg Monday. The locally-owned aerospace parts manufacturer has secured a multi-million dollar contract to repair and overhaul Rolls Royce helicopter engines.

Last year, it was designated as an authorized maintenance repair and overhaul centre (AMROC) at its 65-person operation in Lafayette, La.

This month, it received the same designation for its main Winnipeg facility.

David Haines, Cadorath chief operating officer, said it's a move the company had considered for many years.

"We chose not to do it in the past, because we didn't want to compete with our customers' base," he said. "But that market has shrunk over the years because of acquisitions within the industry."

With companies such as StandardAero acquiring other aerospace engine maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities, there's fewer competitors. Aviation companies and engine OEMs need to make sure there are enough designated repair shops to ensure the industry is properly serviced.

While Cadorath has developed high-level expertise in some processes (such as specialized coatings on high-performance parts) it needed to make sure it secured its positions in the supply chain.

"Really, to solidify our future in the business, we had to move into the engine overhaul side of it," said Haines.

That required about a \$5-million investment in its Louisiana operation — which includes the construction of a new 15,000-square-foot plant — and a slightly smaller investment in reconfiguring its Winnipeg operation, where it employs some 210 people.

Haines figures Cadorath will be need to hire about a dozen more people locally in the next year or so. "And I would expect it to keep growing."

Wendell Wiebe, CEO of the Manitoba Aerospace Association, said the COVID-19 pandemic caused the aerospace industry (like other sectors) to rethink its supply chain dynamics.

Along with industry consolidation, it made some aware of the fact maybe they needed additional suppliers for strategic services, Wiebe said.

"Everyone's had problems with the supply chain," he said. "Now they want to make sure they have additional suppliers."

The Rolls-Royce helicopter engines Cadorath is now certified to handle include those that power Bell 206 Jet Ranger-style vehicles that are among the most popular and versatile in the market.

The designation came about a year after Cadorath became an approved repair centre network for Airbus SE helicopters to perform certain single-part work.

“Our relationship with Airbus is growing every day,” said Haines. “We have both made significant investments in each other. They come and provide training in different things, and we have really been able to grow that part of our business.”

It’s another indication of the careful approach the company, owned by the Cadorath family of Winnipeg, takes — among other things, making sure it never promises anything it can’t deliver

“I’ve been really impressed with Cadorath,” Wiebe said. “It’s a very well-managed company.”

In addition to its Louisiana and Winnipeg hubs, it also employs about 100 people in two plants in Illinois and Iowa, where it builds equipment and parts for the likes of the John Deere and Case New Holland brands.

Haines said one of the most onerous elements of the new designation was getting approval from Transport Canada. In the U.S., it needed Federal Aviation Administration approval.

“Between Transport Canada, the FAA and the OEMs, we’re being audited on a constant rotation and that does not even include internal auditing that you do yourself,” Haines said.

But the company has a patient, careful approach. It has hired experienced business development people in the U.S. to start drumming up business for its new helicopter engine maintenance, repair and overhaul business.

Considering it will have to draw business away from existing operations (StandardAero, for instance), it is going to be tough slogging to keep its new MRO operations busy.

Cadorath has a long-standing relationship with StandardAero, probably the largest gas-powered turbine engine maintenance and repair operation in the world. Although it is headquartered in Arizona, Winnipeg remains the site of StandardAero's largest operations.

Cadorath took on some work for StandardAero a few years ago, when a fire disrupted operations at one its Winnipeg buildings.

Haines said Cadorath has done business with StandardAero for decades.

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Martin Cash has been writing a column and business news at the Free Press since 1989. Over those years he's written through a number of business cycles and the rise and fall (and rise) in fortunes of many local businesses.

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