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## DESIGNING THE FUTURE



**Piece by piece:** Linda Ligouri of Derby runs a bearing machine at Alinabal in Milford. The machine makes a bearing for a wind-driven turbine alternator, a part used by the defense industry in weapons like mortars and smart bombs.

*Company has been making innovative machine parts since 1913*

**WHAT:** Anyone who has bought a movie ticket, used an ATM, driven a snow mobile, all-terrain vehicle or certain model car or looked something up in a department store's wedding registry has probably come in contact with one of Milford-based Alinabal Holdings Corp.'s products.

**WHO:** President and CEO Samuel S. Bergami Jr. and Chief Financial Officer Kevin M. Conlisk, along with nine other investors, bought the company from its original owners in 1988; they have since bought out everyone else. The two have been the owners of the business, which has two sites in Milford and one in Kensing-ton, occupying a total of 175,000 square feet and employing approximately 340 people, since 1998.

**STARTING OUT:** One of Alinabal's five divisions has been around since the beginning of the last century, when in 1913 then-called Laminated Shim provided laminated materials for Henry Ford's Model-T. Now, Laminated Shim is called the Engineered Products Group. Alinabal's other divisions are the Motion Transfer Devices Group, Sterling Screw Machine Products, Practical Automation Inc. and Daco Instruments Corp. Alinabal's been on Woodmont Road in Milford since 1966.

**THAT'S THE TICKET:** About 20 percent of Alinabal's business includes manufacturing printers for theaters, ATMs, the New York Stock Exchange and wedding registries. "Our printers were probably in the original ATM machine," said Conlisk. Added Bergami, "We play a huge roll in the moviehouse ticket

industry."

**ON THE DEFENSIVE:** Alinabal also makes alternators that provide power for smart bombs and mortars. It took four years for the company to develop the part, said Bergami; it began supplying the alternators in 1978. Tiny bearings hold miniscule balls - about the size of a grain of sand - that allow the alternators to spin up to 120,000 rpms.



*RINGS OF STEEL: A laser cutter produces parts—in this case retainer rings for an aerospace customer—from a sheet of stainless steel at an Alinabal plant. The Milford-based business makes a variety of products from printers for ATM machines to parts for smart bombs.*

**STEERING A COURSE:** The biggest part of Alinabal's business, said Bergami, is motion transfer devices, such as rod end bearings. These parts are in snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, construction and lawn and garden equipment and even the animatronic figures and monorail doors at Disney parks. "Anywhere something moves or articulates," is how Bergami describes the uses for the rod end bearings.

**HIGH STANDARDS:** Since 1978, Bergami said, the company has made 5.5 million alternators without a failure. To ensure the quality, the company designs and makes the equipment it uses. "Forty years ago, close enough was good enough," said Bergami. "That's no longer the case."

**CHANGING TIMES:** Since he started at Alinabal 37 years ago, Bergami said customers have become more demanding while the processes they use to make their 50,000 parts - including valves for Honda shock absorbers - are more precise. Products, said Conlisk, are getting cheaper as they get better. When asked if there is a point past which the products can't improve, Bergami said "Not in my eyes."

**- PAM DAWKINS**