



WELL POSITIONED

Family-owned D&L Oil Tools competes with ability to make custom oil well products



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OK INNOVATIONS

BY JIM STAFFORD
For The Oklahoman

TULSA — D&L Oil Tools offers a large catalog of downhole oil and gas tools it manufactures in far west Tulsa. Oilfield products such as packers, anchors and service tools facilitate the completion of wells to get the energy flowing to the surface.

However, D&L pioneered its reputation in the energy industry on its ability to quickly design, manufacture and ship custom products.

"If they have a problem, we're flexible enough at our size that we can get them something quickly that meets their needs," said Lee Eslicker, president and CEO. "It's not uncommon for us to design, build and ship something in a couple of days if they need it."

Founded by Eslicker in 1990, D&L Tools employs 210 people who work in a three-building complex on Tulsa's far west side industrial area. The company also maintains a facility that produces rubber products used in its oil field equipment.

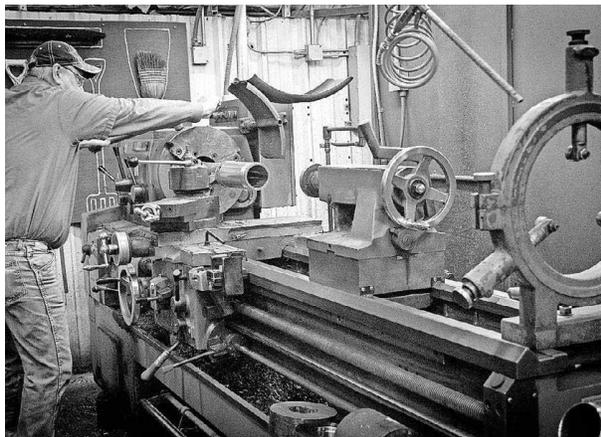
Eslicker's family has a long history in the oil field tool business. It founded a predecessor company in the 1950s that eventually was sold in the 1980s. Today, Eslicker's son, daughter and son-in-law all work in the family business.

Tech in action

On a recent morning, Eslicker escorted me and my colleagues from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) on a tour through the D&L operation.

We saw technology in action as some of its 60 automated, computer numerical control machines turned raw steel tubing into shiny, flawless equipment that is designed to be used deep underground.

"The basic tools we make are called packers," Eslicker said. "They are run in the well, and they form a seal to isolate a certain

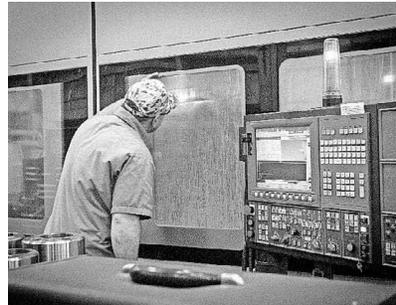


D&L has the ability to quickly design, manufacture and ship custom products.

(PHOTOS PROVIDED BY OCAST)

 **SEE THE VIDEO**

Go to Oklahoman.com to see a video about D&L Oil Tools, an Oklahoma firm that makes specialty tools for drillers.



Automated, computer numerical control machines turn raw steel tubing into equipment designed to be used deep underground.

area, whether you want to produce either above or below that zone or isolate an area to do service work or that sort of thing."

D&L Oil Tools operates in a landscape crowded with competitors, both small and large — think Halliburton, Baker Hughes or Weatherford International. D&L distinguishes itself as a producer of quality products and by its flexibility to create custom parts on the fly.

"We have one patent that is pending right now on a new tool we are very excited about," he said. "It's something that actually came up as a result of one of our engineers meeting with customers and following up on limitations that they saw in the tools they were using. We've come up with a fairly innovative way of dealing with that."

D&L operates with coveted ISO certifications, as well as American Petroleum Institute certifications that allow it to put the API monogram on its products.

"There is constant R&D going on here," Eslicker said. "We employ 10 engineers, and we have a department that does nothing but make pro-

totypes. We make all the equipment we need to test them, and we can test them at temperatures up to 400-500 degrees."

D&L products are used in virtually every active oil field across the U.S., Canada and in 50 countries, Eslicker said. The company recently signed a long-sought deal with a Saudi Arabia-based company.

'Lean' philosophy

As a client company of the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, D&L has qualified for the state's Quality Jobs program, refined its operations and embraced what is known as the lean manufacturing philosophy. The not-for-profit alliance provides manufacturing expertise to small and medium-sized manufacturers across Oklahoma.

D&L operates such an efficient production floor that it has become a showcase, said Dave Rowland, the alliance's president and CEO.

"D&L is a great company, one that we promote not only regionally but nationally," Rowland said. "What makes D&L Oil Tools a great company is, one, it has family values. And they really create value by being customizable for what their customers need, being flexible to their needs and delivering great quality."

Despite the hum of the manufacturing floor surrounding us, Eslicker described it as a family atmosphere with many longtime employees.

"We like to think that D&L is a great place to work," he said. "We care a lot about our employees, and we think they care about us. Our main focus is taking care of our customers and taking care of the people here who have made us successful."

Jim Stafford writes about Oklahoma innovation and research and development topics on behalf of the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science & Technology (OCAST).

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