



Inside the Tasus plant in Florence.

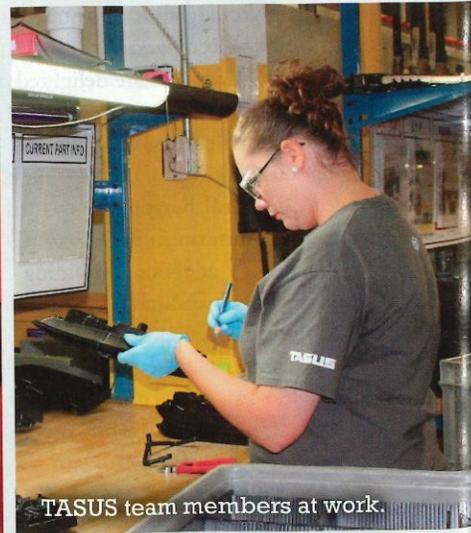
## HONORS FOR PLASTICS

FLORENCE SUPPLIER FIRM TASUS NAMED SMALL MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR BY ALABAMA AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

By KATHLEEN FARRELL

**W**ITH MANUFACTURING LOCATIONS IN FLORENCE, AND IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, TASUS CORP. IS A PREMIER SUPPLIER OF PLASTIC MOLDED COMPONENTS, CONVERTED PRODUCTS, FLEXOGRAPHIC LABELS AND DISTRIBUTED PRODUCTS TO THE AUTOMOTIVE AND TRANSPORTATION MARKETS.

Conceptualized in 2008 and completed in 2012, the 104,000-square-foot Florence production facility was set up to mirror the operation of the company's



TASUS team members at work.

Bloomington plant, with the goal of being present to the growing Southern automotive industry. Tasus, which has been in business since 1989, is among 24 global companies in 32 locations owned by Tsuchiya Co. Ltd., operating in Nagoya, Japan, since the 1950s.

While other companies were scaling back in response to the global financial crisis, Tasus and its parent company, Tsuchiya Co., were making plans for growth — specifically in Alabama.

“We strategically placed the Alabama plant in Florence to meet the needs for quality injection molders in northern central Alabama,” says Jay Brown, vice president of business development with Tsuchiya Group North America. “With the growing trend in the automotive sector in the southeast U.S. and the availability of a smart and talented workforce throughout the region, the decision proved to be a good one — and what is there not to like about Florence and Muscle Shoals.”

Tasus is a Tier One supplier to Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America and a Tier Two supplier to OEM automotive and transportation markets including agriculture and heavy truck.

“From our technologically advanced robotics and machinery to our unwavering focus on quality, testing and the environment, we continue to set new production standards,” says Amy Ketcham, president of Tsuchiya Group North America. The company molds and distributes automotive products for interior, exterior, drivetrain combustion engine, EV and hybrid vehicles as requested

Tasus creates plastic injection molded automotive parts at its plant in Florence.



by customers. “Tasus forms a partnership between itself and our customers,” says Ketcham. “We work as a team to understand their needs and capabilities.”

A significant employer in the Florence area, Tasus considers its people to be the most valuable component of its business and seeks to invest in and protect its workforce. The Florence facility currently employs approximately 145 team members in roles ranging from management to hourly manufacturing operations.

“Tasus Alabama’s diverse leadership team is focused on the company’s mission: With humble service, we inspire and enrich our team members’ lives, support our communities and partner with our global customers and suppliers to provide innovative solutions,” says Jason Pace, operations manager of Tasus Alabama. “When our employees succeed, we succeed and, in turn, the community and customers succeed.” The company offers full-time employees a variety of benefits including paid time off, 401(k)

match, tuition assistance, attendance bonuses, adoption assistance and first-time home buyer’s assistance.

Tasus’ commitment to the mutual success of its employees and the communities in which it operates can be seen in its support of Northwest Shoals Community College (NWSCC) in Muscle Shoals. In 2013, NWSCC began offering an associate in applied science degree with an injection molding technology option and a short-term certificate program. Tasus donated fittings and hoses for auxiliary injection molding equipment and allowed a NWSCC instructor to gain hands-on training while working in all areas of the Florence plant.

Tasus shows its commitment to environmental and community responsibilities through its prevention of pollution program, environmental objectives and targets, and full recycling program including plastics, metals, pallets, cardboard, paper and shrink wrap. The company seeks to reduce electrical usage



Jason Pace with the AAMA Alabama Automotive Supplier of the Year Award.

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— JASON PACE, OPERATIONS MANAGER OF TASUS ALABAMA

through power-down programs, including machinery, lighting, PCs, server virtualization and air leak monitoring.

The team at Tasus practices a Kaizen working culture that encourages all employees to work together to improve company performance, products and services. Tasus has received Toyota Certificates of Achievement for quality

performance and value improvement performance, as well as quality and delivery. The company's core values include character, can-do attitude, commitment, communication, collaboration and curiosity. "These elements all fall within the company's two major pillars borrowed from Toyota and the Toyota Production System (TPS): respect for people and

continuous improvement," says Pace. TPS training, which is voluntary and employee driven, is offered at both the Bloomington and Florence facilities.

To provide outstanding service to its customers, the Tasus team strives to deliver on three key metrics. "First, we deliver a quality part. The customer provides requirements that are acceptable for a quality part. We use automation, 'poka-yoke' error prevention and training to ensure that staff meets customer requirements," says Pace. Secondly, the company seeks to deliver orders on time and under the terms agreed upon with the customers. "We provide on-time delivery by scheduling our plant in an efficient manner and hold safety stock for when unseen circumstances can't be avoided." Lastly, Tasus prioritizes continuous improvement in every facet of its business practice, allowing the company to serve more clients and offer new and advanced capabilities by expanding facilities.

The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA) named Tasus Small Manufacturer of the Year for 2024. Pace and Kristen McCaney, human relations manager at Tasus Alabama, attended the awards banquet in November. "The recognition is great and an incredible honor the members of the AAMA have bestowed upon us. It is a reflection of the smart work and dedication of the entire Alabama team," says McCaney. She notes that while awards are not the company's main goal, the honor serves as a reminder of the impact of its team's efforts toward continuous improvement: "It is a never-ending cycle. We are humbled and deeply grateful for this acknowledgement that inspires us to continue pursuing excellence and living our vision of 'making it better.'"

Tasus plans to continue a slow and controlled growth strategy, Ketcham says. "This is a path we plan to continue to take for some time ahead." The company continues to seek employees who share its vision and core values and are interested in a long-term, mutually beneficial employment relationship.

*Kathleen Farrell is a Mobile-based freelance contributor to Business Alabama.*

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