



KOLBENSCHMIDT PIERBURG Projects Strong Growth in North America

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DETROIT, MI ([PRWEB](#)) March 27, 2004 -Kolbenschmidt Pierburg, a major tier-one automotive supplier based in Germany, projects a major growth in sales for its three North American automotive companies in the next four years.

The company's current annual North American sales of nearly \$320 million accounts for more than 15 percent of its worldwide sales total of \$2.1 billion. North American sales are projected to jump to \$500 million by 2008, an increase of more than 55 percent.

Kolbenschmidt Pierburg has three automotive companies operating in the U.S., including Karl Schmidt Unisia, Inc., Pierburg, Inc. and KS Bearings, Inc.

The Pierburg, Inc. unit manufactures water and oil pumps, electric throttle controls and secondary air pumps. Based in Fountain Inn, S.C., the Pierburg, Inc. group projects the steepest growth of the three companies in the U.S.

"We are currently putting resources in place to both fuel and support our North American growth," said Andy Knackstedt, president of the Pierburg Inc. unit. "By adding design, program management, account management and marketing support here in the U.S., we have created an infrastructure that allows us to better support our customers as well as our current and future business."

Knackstedt added, "The option of manufacturing at our facility in Brazil also supports our projected growth and allows us to offer flexible alternatives to our customers."

Though already a market leader for secondary air pumps in North America and Europe, the division attributes much of its growth to a significant sales jump in air pumps and other emissions products like electric exhaust gas recirculation valves.

"We have developed a new modular secondary air pump that achieves a weight reduction of almost 40 percent and a space savings of 25 percent," said Knackstedt. "That is generating a lot of interest with our customers here in the U.S."

As a longtime piston supplier to the North American market, the Karl Schmidt Unisia unit of Kolbenschmidt Pierburg, based in Marinette, Wisc., posted record sales in 2003.

"Though firmly established in North America, Karl Schmidt Unisia is committed to investing in this market in an ongoing effort to expand our capabilities and better serve our customers," said Frank Pohlmann, president of Karl Schmidt Unisia. The division has invested nearly \$40 million in capital over the last two years at its facilities in Marinette, Wisc., Leamington, Canada, and Fort Wayne, Ind.



“Part of that investment included a new state-of-the-art engineering and test facility in Fort Wayne that allows us to offer complete development and test capabilities to our customers,” Pohlmann added.

The company’s KS Bearings group produces engine bearings for automotive and heavy-duty applications and also is headquartered in Fountain Inn, S.C. The unit plans to increase its sales in North America by targeting more automotive applications and expanding its product offerings in engine bearings and metallic transmission bushings and washers.

“The outlook and growth potential for the divisions of Kolbenschmidt Pierburg look very promising in the North American market,” notes Dr. Gerd Kleinert, chairman of the Kolbenschmidt Pierburg management board. “We will continue to invest in these businesses to support our North American customers and our growth.”

A leading supplier of pistons, automotive oil and water pumps, electric throttle control, bearings, secondary air systems and electric exhaust gas recirculation valves, Kolbenschmidt Pierburg has three North American units – Pierburg, Inc., Karl Schmidt Unisia, Inc. and KS Bearings, Inc. -- with production facilities in Fountain Inn, S.C.; Greensburg, IN; Fort Wayne, IN; Marinette, WI, and Leamington, Ontario, in addition to its North American sales offices in Southfield.

Kolbenschmidt Pierburg AG is a subsidiary of Rheinmetall AG. The company has approximately 11,500 employees at its five automotive divisions. Global sales for its Aluminum Technology, Motor Parts, Pierburg GmbH, KS Pistons and KS Bearings divisions totaled nearly \$2.1 billion in 2003. Additional information is available on the Internet at www.kolbenschmidt-pierburg.com.

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Company Contact – North America
Julie Morey
Kolbenschmidt Pierburg
Phone: +1.248.327.9034
E-Mail: Julie.morey@pierburginc.com

Company Contact – Worldwide
Folke Heyer
Rheinmetall AG
Phone: +011.49.211.473.4550
E-Mail: Folke.Heyer@rheinmetall-ag.com

Media Contact
Chip Drake
AutoCom Associates
Phone: +1.248.647.8621
E-Mail: cdrake@usautocom.com



Contact Information

Janet Krol

AUTOCOM ASSOCIATES

<http://www.kolbenschmidt-pierburg.com>

248.647.8621

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