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Photos by Michael R. Brown, FLORIDA TODAY

**Focused work.** Tracy VanNostran works on a circuit board assembly at Symetrics Industries, a Melbourne-based defense contractor.

The company, led by President Mitch Garner, below, won a statewide Manufacturer of the Year award in November.

# Symetrics adds state honor

Business of year for two chambers is named state Manufacturer of Year

BY WAYNET PRICE  
 FLORIDA TODAY

Symetrics Industries is ending 2008 on a positive note.

In November, the Melbourne-based defense contractor was named one of the Manufacturers Association of Florida's Manufacturers of the Year.

Earlier this month, the Melbourne-Palm Bay Area Chamber of Commerce honored the company by giving it a "Best Business Award" for the second consecutive year. And the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce gave Symetrics a "Business of the Year" award for excellence in technical manufacturing.

"To be recognized by both chambers of commerce in the same year is an unprecedented reward for us, and we appreciate the esteemed status they have bestowed upon our company," Mitch Garner, Symetrics' president and chief executive officer, said in an e-mail.

Of the statewide association honor, Garner said: "The recognition is certainly rewarding, and it also provides validation that we are doing the right things at Symetrics, both from a customer point of view and an employee relationship point of view."

The company and three other



finalists for the association's award in the small manufacturer category were judged on several criteria, including leadership, strategic planning and work force focus. Site visits were part of the process, as well.

Symetrics, a private company, develops countermeasure

systems for aircraft that recognize incoming rocket threats, like shoulder-fired Stinger missiles, and then directs them safely away.

Another product is "improved data modems" or IDMs, small devices that wirelessly transmit digital data over traditional UHF

## Symetrics Industries LLC

- Address: 1615 W. NASA Blvd., Melbourne.
- Founded: 1962
- Employees: 150
- President/chief executive officer: Mitch Garner
- Products/services: Two main product lines: a countermeasure dispenser systems that recognizes incoming rocket threats and directs them safely away, and improved data modems that wirelessly transmit digital data over traditional UHF and VHF radios.
- On the Web: [www.symetrics.com](http://www.symetrics.com)

and VHF radios.

Located at 1615 W. NASA Blvd., Symetrics employs about 150 people.

Garner said the company's outlook for 2009 is encouraging and that the company seems "to be fairly insulated from the currently economic slowdown." Sales, he said, should be in the mid-\$50 million range, which would eclipse 2008's sales.

The company also expects several new contracts in both its  
**See SYMETRICS, 7C**

## Symetrics will add employees

**SYMETRICS**, from 8C

data links sector and aircraft self-protection.

That also means the company will be looking to add a few more employees.

"The defense industry has been relatively strong recently as compared to other industries," Garner said.

Symetrics Industries started out in 1962 in Satellite Beach.

That's when a group of engineers, developing telemetry systems to track missiles fired from the Air Force Missile Test Center in Cape Canaveral, ventured out



Michael R. Brown, FLORIDA TODAY

**High techster.** Karin DiDio works on a circuit board at Symetrics Industries in Melbourne.

on their own.

It went public in 1968. Soon after, the company ran into problems, and Symetrics filed for bankruptcy in 1979, emerging two years later as a private company with three directors.

By the late 1980s, after winning a Navy contract for work on the Sparrow missile, the company began a slow turnaround to success that continues to this day. ■

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