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Contributed photo

**SUGAR GROVE TOWNSHIP** — The start-up crew of ILSCO Extrusions Inc. poses for a photo in the Sugar Grove Township plant.

# New year, new goals

*Four months into operation, ILSCO Extrusions looking forward to growth*

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**SUGAR GROVE TOWNSHIP** — With four months under their belts, ILSCO Extrusions Inc. has started 2011 strong with a set of goals for the new year and a list of accomplishments from the old.

Since starting up production Oct. 4 and bringing back to life the then-closed Sugar Grove Township plant, ILSCO Extrusions has expanded not only upon the work they do, but upon the facilities they purchased.

“Over the last several months, we’ve done a lot of work to rejuvenate this site,” ILSCO Extrusions General Manager John Thigpen said. “It’s been rewarding to breathe new life into the plant and the Greenville community.”

On the production end, they’re now using three of the plant’s four presses, two more than when production began, and in the last 100 days they’ve introduced 272 new extrusion profiles, or essentially 272 new products. In addition to working on new products, they’ve also expanded how much work they do on those products, adding fabricating, which they began Dec. 3. Currently operating two of nine fabricating cells, extruded pieces are cut to length via precision and bulk sawing, before they’re sent on to ILSCO plants in Cincinnati, Ohio, where ILSCO is headquartered, and Canada.

See **ILSCO**, page 9



Caleb Stright/R-A

**SUGAR GROVE TOWNSHIP** — ILSCO Extrusions Inc. Operations Manager Gary Jones, left, and General Manager John Thigpen discuss the examples of the extruded products made at the Sugar Grove Township plant in front of Thigpen and finished products ILSCO machines and finishes them into, which Jones is holding.

## ILSCO

*Continued from page 1*

ILSCO purchased the former Signature Aluminum facility June 30 for \$3.85 million, which included 165 acres of land and 686,000 square feet under roof, which breaks down to the 625,000-square-foot plant and the 61,000-square-foot adjacent office which includes the world headquarters of Werner Co.

Including Werner, they’ve renewed all lease agreements with their tenants and added one, AT&T, for which they’ve installed cell panels on the south water tower.

The other tenants are Clifton Automatic Screw Machining, which does aluminum and steel tube cutting for automotive parts, and Ainsworth Pet Care Products, known by most as Dad’s Dog Food. The latter and Werner have seen improvements to their facilities, Werner Co. getting a new roof and Ainsworth having their shipping docks modified to better meet Federal Food and Drug Administration regulations.

Thigpen said about a third of the building is under lease, but they “still have significant development opportunities for tenants.” Developing those opportunities is one of their goals for the next year, of which they’ve defined five.

Considering the tenant opportunities, Thigpen says they have roughly 100,000 square feet of the plant that is currently unoccupied, as well as much of the land and the second floor office space at the plant.

Because over its history the building was expanded in sections, he said, each section is like a room unto itself, convenient for new tenants. ILSCO’s facility also includes its own water treatment and sewage treatment facilities and own power substation.

Thigpen and Operations Manager Gary Jones said the number one goal for ILSCO Extrusion is to ab-

sorb parent company ILSCO’s need for extruded products. Before ILSCO bought the plant, it had been a customer of the Sugar Grove Township plant since 1967, purchasing extruded aluminum, machining and finishing it into mechanical connectors. The goal now is to meet that need and increase its number of extruded products, Thigpen said. By the end of the year, they hope to double it.

In addition to absorbing ILSCO’s extrusion needs and extruding more products, they also hope to cut down on ILSCO’s lead time in getting component parts by more than 50 percent, to increase the amount of business they can do, as well as acquire new customers attracted to ILSCO Extrusion’s strengths.

ILSCO Extrusions’ strengths, obviously are in extruding aluminum, but specifically varieties of aluminum that fit the needs of ILSCO, a manufacturer of electrical connectors. They use mainly 6,000 series aluminum, an alloy which includes magnesium and silicon for added strength, and 1,000 series, which is nearly pure aluminum and conducts electricity better, but has less strength.

Although ILSCO’s other goals focus on production, the last one is a little different: Expand their involvement in the Mercer County community.

“Mercer County is a great place to live and work,” Thigpen said. “The fact that we were able to attract an investment from a company as solid as ILSCO proves that point. We’ve been meeting our goals and we look forward to accelerating our growth in the coming year.”

For those looking for employment at the facility, Thigpen says ILSCO Extrusions utilizes PA CareerLink for hiring new employees.