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## MAINE IS INTERNATIONAL: Focus on Lewiston

Maine's second largest city, Lewiston exerts a significant impact upon the diversity, religious variety, commerce, education, and economic power of the state. It is one-half of the Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which is responsible for approximately 4% of Maine exports annually, as well as home to 5 colleges and universities and Central Maine Medical Center. Ongoing redevelopment of the Bates Mill Complex – a former textile factory with current tenants such as Fishbones Grill, TD Bank, and Grand Rounds – attracts more than 2,000 workers and brings new life to downtown.

While the dominant language spoken in the city is English, Lewiston is best known for the strength and vibrancy of its French heritage and is home to one of the largest concentrations of French speakers in the country. The city has one of the highest per capita Muslim populations in the United States. Of Lewiston's 36,000 residents, 6,000 are African refugees and asylum-seekers. In November 2019, voters elected Safiya Khalid the youngest person to ever serve on the Lewiston City Council, as well as the first Somali immigrant.



In this issue, we'll meet two Lewiston manufacturers: a "unicorn" whose products enable technology in everything from surgical equipment to high-end cookware and an Italian company that invested \$10 million to create a fully automated production facility to make "giant vending machines."

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# President's Corner



**"...in order to make money," he said.**

I mean, of course we're an economic development agency after all. But it's always good to remind ourselves what that means: helping individual businesses, and the state's economy as a whole, find growth and prosperity. For MITC, at its base, that means giving companies the tools and strategies they need to make export sales, and it also means bringing opportunities to light that Maine businesses may not immediately see.

In the recently-launched Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029, food and beverage was identified as one of four focused areas for development: in addition to last month's Winter Fancy Food Show, we're organizing a delegation from Maine to SIAL Paris, the largest food innovation trade show in the world with 310,000 visitors from 194 countries. This is a great chance for export-ready producers to reach a global audience.

We'll be bringing Trade Day 2020 to the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor this spring, where we'll explore business prospects emerging from addressing sustainability. We'll be announcing a dynamic lineup of speakers and panelists to talk about how companies are finding economic success in other parts of the world and what we can apply here in Maine. Stay tuned.

And, as always, we're hard at work developing our GlobalU training series and working with companies all over Maine to answer questions and help position your team to be successful.

Thanks for all you do. Please let us know what we can do to help you!

Wade Merritt, President and State Director of International Trade

## SIAL Paris 2020

Maine International Trade Center (MITC) invites you to participate in the State of Maine booth at the SIAL Paris Food Show, the world's largest international food & beverage trade exhibition, on October 18 – 22, in Paris, France. STEP Financial Assistance Awards are available for SBA-eligible Maine companies seeking new international sales with reimbursement up to \$4,000 for this trade show.



Space is limited. Learn more today at [mitc.com](http://mitc.com) or contact Senior Trade Specialist Jeff Bennett ([jbennett@mitc.com](mailto:jbennett@mitc.com)).





## Elmet Technologies LLC

Elmet Technologies is one of the few places in the world where you can go and actually see something that is on the periodic table. The 90-year-old company in Lewiston works with tungsten, molybdenum, and other refractory metals that have high melting points, superior strength at elevated temperature, and other unique properties that enable technology in everything from surgical equipment to high-end cookware.

“Many people don’t know us by name, but we exist behind the scenes to make a lot of things work,” says Elmet Technologies CEO Andy Nichols.

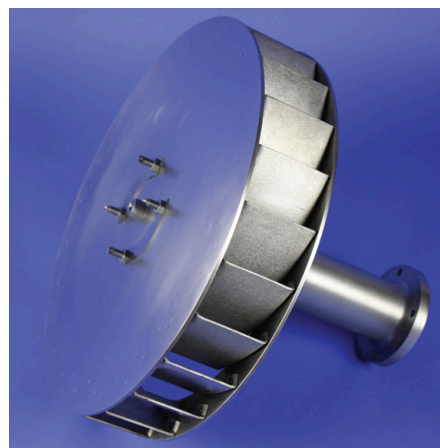
Elmet Technologies started out as a lighting company, providing tungsten filaments and lighting assemblies for traditional home and industrial lighting, but as consumers began to shift to LED lighting the company was able to pivot to new applications.

“We are a key ingredient provider for systems in many markets,” Nichols explains. “A good example is a CT scan in your body, we manufacture critical components to make optical filtration happen in a CT machine. We also work in medical therapies for applications like targeting systems to ensure the delivery of the energy goes to the exact location in your body.”

The company manufactures more than 50 different alloys from tungsten and molybdenum and does everything from making powders through finished goods, machine parts, assemblies, and some boutique contract manufacturing.

The raw materials are sourced from around the world. For example, the largest tungsten mine in the world is in Vietnam. China, South America, Chile, Europe and the U.S. also have refractory metal ore deposits and mining operations. According to Nichols, the company is the last fully-integrated, USA-owned designer and manufacturer of refractory metals left in the Americas.

“It’s a tough industry to work in, we’re a bit of a unicorn, but we have an important mission,” says Nichols. “We enable a lot of technology, and we help many things happen, from life-saving surgeries to critical defense components.”



In December, Elmet Technologies was awarded a \$7.2 million contract vehicle (\$4.2 million first released) to accelerate its development of tungsten and molybdenum products to supply various needs of the U.S. Department of Defense.

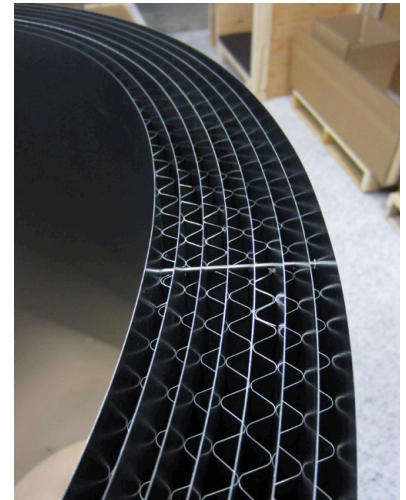
Elmet Technologies employs approximately 160 people at its plant with 250,000 square feet of manufacturing space on 38 acres. Nichols says it is truly a STEM business deep in technology and rooted in material science. The jobs range from highly-skilled engineers and scientists to dedicated manufacturing associates.

International sales account for between 10% and 40% of sales, depending on the year. Their materials are difficult to work with and transport, which can be an obstacle on the international market. Canada and Mexico are their strongest export partners, but Elmet Technologies also ships products to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Central/South America.

The company was MITC's Exporter of the Year in 2009. During the past decade, they have participated on trade missions with MITC, received STEP Financial Assistance Awards to attend overseas trade shows overseas, and sent employees to MITC provided training.

In 2019, Elmet Technologies received an OEA grant through MITC's Defense Industry Maine initiative for consultation services in preparation for an external audit to obtain ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation of their in-house testing lab, which was required to expand their aerospace and defense markets.

"The future is bright," says Nichols. "The company has been around for 90 years. My job is to be a good steward of a legacy business and make sure it continues growing and being successful."



## Modula Inc.

It can take up to 2,000 different parts for Ford to build a car engine. To make the process more efficient, the company uses what is essentially a giant vending machine to store the parts in trays and deliver them on demand. That machine is built in Lewiston by Modula Inc.

"It's an industrial automated storage solution. You type the code of the item you need, there is an elevator to take the tray to where your item is located and then it delivers the tray to you outside," explains Antonio Pagano, Modula Inc. CEO. "It gives the final user all the advantages of automation which means saving time, improving efficiency, and saving costs."

Born in Italy, the company made Lewiston its U.S. headquarters in 2015 with a \$10 million investment into the former Diamond Phoenix building. That investment allowed Modula Inc. to create a fully automated production facility to build vertical lift modules (VLM). The company also has production facilities in Italy and China and recently opened a new U.S. plant in Ohio.

"Anyone with a warehouse is a customer of Modula. We can sell to food and beverage, automotive, aerospace, and pharmaceutical; we aren't tied to any one business sector," says Pagano. Some of their customers include Amazon, Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, and L.L.Bean.

Since Pagano arrived in Lewiston a little over a year ago, the company has grown from 70 to 130 employees. Production has doubled in Maine. In 2019, they produced 400 units that are shipped to warehouses all across North America.



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## Modula Inc. continued

“The real big benefit is the saving of space because with the normal warehouse you need shelves and racks,” said Pagano. “With our vertical lift module (VLM), you can condense all the shelves in a small footprint and use all the height you have at your disposal. Our machine can go up to 45 feet total.”

Modula began 30 years ago in Italy as a small team of people working on an industrial storage solution that would maximize warehouse space. It now operates worldwide, with 650 employees and annual revenue of \$180 million.

Working with MITC’s Invest in Maine initiative, Manuel Silvestrini, Director of Business Development at Modula’s Italy location, shared the company’s experience in Maine with other Italian companies and investors at U.S. Department of Commerce Select-USA events in Milan and Bologna last year.



Modula Inc. became a MITC member in 2019 and sees the organization as an important partner in helping them make connections in Maine.

“It’s a mutual benefit,” says Pagano. “We like the MITC events and as members we are gaining more Maine contacts and opportunities to network and let people know we are here.”

It isn’t nearly as common in Italy for people to leave home for a job, but Pagano welcomed the chance to bring his young family to Maine and help grow the company. He may not have the Swiss Alps here, but he’s got easy access to ski mountains and a job that he loves.



“I came here and have been blessed,” says Pagano. “The market boomed, and I have seen huge growth.”

“We do face problems and once you solve one another one will appear, but this is the good part of the job,” Pagano adds. “It keeps you engaged, offers new challenges, and when you overcome those with your team, you are proud.”



## WHAT'S AHEAD



**Accidental Exporter**  
March 11, Lewiston

**Harmonized Tariff Schedule and  
Schedule B Classification Training**  
March 24, Portland

**Export 101**  
April 16, Bangor

## SAVE THE DATE

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