

METTLE AGAINST METAL - STEEL FIRM HAS HIGH HOPES - 'BIG PUSH' TO FASTEN DOWN CHICAGO'S WIDE-OPEN OPPORTUNITY

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Memphis-based BCS Industries, formerly known as Bluff City Steel, has acquired its second steel processing facility in Ohio.

And with it, the company, born in 1996, now says it's one of the nation's largest wire, rod and bar processors supplying the fastener industry.

On Dec. 31, BCS completed its acquisition of Cuyahoga Steel and Wire in Solon, Ohio; the plant, which has been renamed BCS Cuyahoga, has about 75 employees and sales that exceeded \$30 million in 2002, company officials said. Privately held BCS's plants in Memphis and Maple Heights, Ohio, (acquired in 2001) have about 103 employees combined, company officials said. "It was a great opportunity," Gail Mallery, BCS general manager for its three facilities, said about the recent acquisition, which provides BCS with 70 percent additional capacity. That gives BCS the ability to process 60,000 tons of steel per month, officials said.

BCS provides the steel that companies use to make nuts, bolts and other fasteners for a wide range of products. BCS Cuyahoga adds a product line that allows the company to serve the large-diameter segment of the fastener market. Now that BCS is a full-service provider, Mike Mayer, BCS's vice president of quality, said the company is focusing on Chicago's fastener industry, which is the largest multipurpose fastener market in the country. "That's our big push right now," he said.

Before BCS's acquisitions, the Maple Heights plant was in receivership, and the Memphis plant, on Harbor Drive, was shut down by its previous owner. That theme continues with the latest acquisition, a money-losing operation for several years, said Mayer. But BCS believes it can make the Solon plant profitable. "We believe we can turn it around," Mayer said.