

“Space is a huge market for a lot of us in (Western Massachusetts). The U.S. has been behind the eight ball for many years. Now it’s a great area to be in.”



SUSAN M. KASA, PRESIDENT, BOULEVARD MACHINE, WESTFIELD

Boulevard

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release sales numbers. In 2020, the company moved from Springfield to Westfield. Boulevard had outgrown its space in Springfield — it was spread over three buildings for a total of 9,000 square feet — and Kasa felt the small space was not projecting the image its customers were expecting.

Boulevard was looking into expanding the Springfield location when the Westfield spot — a former manufacturing facility — became available. The company now has just under 21,000 square feet, in a space renovated to suit its specific needs. It also has room to expand, if needed, she said.

“It’s a great fit for us. This was a win-win. It’s highly technical work we are doing. We’re projecting a very different image,” Kasa said. “We finished a year of rebranding because we moved into a new building. We have a new logo and a new tagline that we trademarked, ‘Machining the Future.’”

The company is “aggressively hiring” machinists and has been looking for more employees since it moved into the building, she added.

One of its new customers is SpaceX. Boulevard Machine also does business with General Dynamics Corp., Raytheon Technologies Corp., and Collins Aerospace.

Because Boulevard is a small company, it can offer shorter lead times, quicker turnarounds and can give customers a quality product at a lesser cost, according to Kasa. Products also are shipped all over the world, she said.

Aerospace is one of Boulevard’s main business lines, along with defense, Kasa said,



Stephen Jeffers works at computer numerical control mill at Boulevard Machine. (DAVE SOBACK PHOTO)

noting it also makes parts for F-35 Lightning II and F-18 Super Hornet fighter jets.

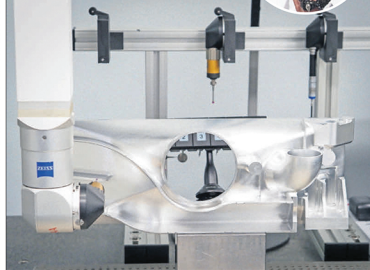
SpaceX, she said, approached Boulevard as it had specific deadlines and needed fast turnarounds. Boulevard had made a sun shaft for the company, which Kasa described as an intricate, large piece with gears for rockets.

Boulevard also makes parts for both manned and unmanned vehicles that go into space, as well as the satellite market, Kasa said.

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A part is being manufactured at Boulevard Machine in Westfield. The defense and aerospace industries are among the primary customers of its work. (DAVE SOBACK PHOTO)

Recently, the company hosted the machine program from Westfield Technical Academy, the city’s vocational high school, so students could get a firsthand look at how a local precision machining manufacturer operates.

She also does outreach to other vocational schools in the area, including Chicopee Comprehensive, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical, Smith Vocational and Agricultural and William J. Dean Vocational Technical high schools and Springfield Technical Community College.

“They can see what our environment looks like, and it helps educate the parents. Not everyone needs four to eight years of college,” Kasa said. “It’s such

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Susan M. Kasa, president of Boulevard Machine, on company’s move from Springfield to larger facility in Westfield

a viable market, and they can make a very good wage. We’re always looking for more people. Our machinists can work an average of 60 hours a week. They make anywhere from an

entry level \$18 to \$20, or up to high \$30s, an hour.”

Kasa said the company has been fortunate to receive several grants, including a \$95,838 grant in 2022 from the Massachusetts Manufacturing Accelerate Program that was used to purchase new machine tooling equipment to meet demand from the space sector.

It’s also a family business. Kasa’s son Kristian is the vice president of operations at the company. She said she is proud to be at the helm of a woman-owned, small manufacturing business, adding small businesses are “the heartbeat of America.”

“As corporate America continues to downsize, we’re here to grow,” Kasa said.



Boulevard Machine, certified as a women’s business enterprise, is headquartered at 326 Lockhouse Road in Westfield. At left, Christopher Footitt is a computer numerical control machinist at Boulevard Machine. Below is Susan M. Kasa, CEO and president of Boulevard Machine. (DAVE SOBACK PHOTO)

MANUFACTURING

Boulevard is ‘Machining the Future’

Aerospace, defense work powers growth

BY LORI STABILE
Special to The Republican

When Susan M. Kasa considered taking over Boulevard Machine, she recognized the company’s potential.

“It was something I was willing to learn,” Kasa, Boulevard Machine’s president, said in a recent interview.

Kasa, who worked in public relations, knew the customer base could grow. She bought the company in 2006, when it had only eight employees. And, she said, Boulevard has been steadily growing ever since she took ownership, noting the company that has been in existence since the 1950s is now a multimillion-dollar company with 25 employees.

The past three years were the best yet with double-digit growth. She expects the same sales increases again in 2023.

“I see the coming year as a year for us to blossom,” Kasa said.

Because the company is private, she declined to



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