Geographic Diversification

With its 1990 revenues of $6 million, Creole Foods of Opelousas, marketers of Tony Chachere's Seasonings and cookbooks, marked a jump of about $10,000 in sales, a strong enough performance to put the company at number 44 in the 1991 Audemars Top 100.

That's quite a lot of business—about all the business that the company's current facilities could handle. "At this point in time, we've maxed out at this location," says company President and Chairman Alon Chachere, with understandable pride. "We've just poured a slab for a new building that will add 30,000 square feet to our plant."

The new addition will not quite double the firm's square footage, but because of its design, it will more than double the capacity—the new loading docks will be able to handle shipment loading five pallets high as compared to two today.

Creole Foods of Opelousas markets the Tony Chachere products created by Alon's father—who is still active in product development—throughout the United States, with a concentration in the south.

"We're just about everywhere in the United States, with a concentration in the South," Alon Chachere says, "with about 85 percent of our business coming from the Deep South."

Chachere believes that the company is positioned for continued strong performance and has identified its next production area as the eastern part of the Midwest. We have targeted our growth amongst Hispanic Americans. This part of the population is very family-oriented and spends more of its money to eat together at home. They also enjoy dishes like rice and beans with flavorful spices.

If that sounds familiar, then you get the point. And as does Creole Foods—the company is modifying the packaging of its entire product line so that labeling and directions are in both Spanish and English. Promoting growth markets for Tony Chachere seasonings are Hispanic families in Texas and California.

"We've been able to develop good relationships with our markets and enjoy good feedback," says Chachere. "With our expanded capacity, we feel that we can have solid growth and serve our emerging markets well."