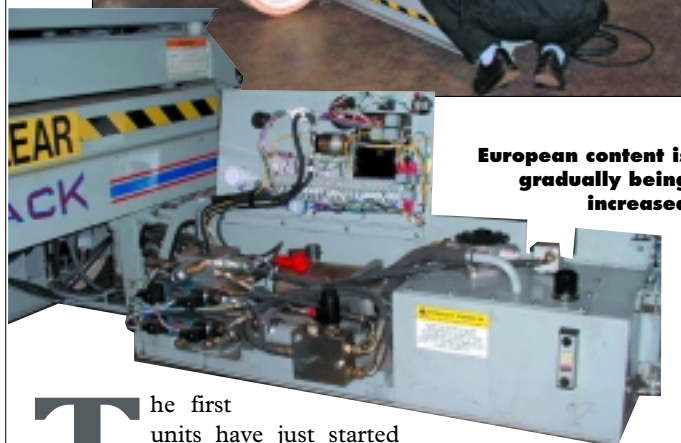


## NEW FACTORY

# Skyjack: Made in Hungary

**Tim Whiteman** reports from the  
Mezogep factory



**T**he first units have just started to roll out of Skyjack's Hungarian production facility and are now available to purchase.

At the same time Jim Hacking, president of Skyjack has restructured Skyjack's European operations. Floris van Dam, previously managing director of Skyjack's European operations, is no longer with the company and much of the day-to-day management is now with Martin Davies in the UK.

The changes to Skyjack's senior European management were announced during the Conexpo show. Jim Hacking, president of Skyjack, told *Cranes & Access* that future developments would reflect customer demand for senior personnel with direct relevant experience of the powered access industry.

Skyjack's plans to build large numbers of platforms in Europe remain unaltered, said Hacking. These will be built in part of the Mezogep factory in Hungary. This is 60 per cent owned by Linamar which owns nearly 47 per cent of Skyjack. Linamar specialises in building precision-machined components and automotive parts. The factory in Hungary, which is about 2.5 hours drive outside Budapest, employs 1450 people and specialises in making components which are supplied to customers such as GM-Opel, Audi, Newage, Ford and Honeywell.

Production of Skyjack platforms is a small part of Linamar's business, but is one that it takes seriously as *Cranes & Access* found during a recent visit. One part of the factory has been cor-



### **A specialist team has been created**

doned off and set aside to build Skyjack platforms and a separate manufacturing team has been created.

Skyjack has started production with the 3220 and 3226. Coming soon are the 3015, 3219 and 4626. All are rigorously tested at Skyjack's base in Canada before being submitted for CE approval. Also being built in Mezogep is Skyjack's Light Boom range, formerly made in Germany at Löbau.

During the coming 12 months, Skyjack expects to sell 1000 platforms in Europe, of which 500 are scheduled to be built in Mezogep. The number of European built products is predicted to grow rapidly after that. Much of the new product will be targeted at the UK, which Skyjack says is one of its two most important European markets – the other is Spain. Germany and Italy are expected to increase in importance in the coming year.

An important part of the Linamar operation is its ability to do its own welding, cutting and painting – the painting facilities are regarded especially highly within Skyjack. Mezogep was bought by Linamar in 1992 during Hungary's privatisation program and immediately became involved in supplying automotive components. Since then more than 400 engineers, technicians and operators have been on training programs in Canada.

So, are the European built platforms the same as the Made In Canada platforms? Yes and no. The design is essentially the same, but Skyjack's European platforms are built to metric specifications using metric steel. This means the dimensions, including the working height, are slightly different. Improvements include things like European dimensions being applied to the lifting slots used by Fork Lift Trucks. Skyjack

staff were also highly complimentary about Mezogep's auto-industry standard painting facilities and suggested that quality should be even better than on units made in Canada. Skyjack is also intentionally using a large number of European sourced components in the European



### **Booms are also being built**

platforms. The engines and hydraulic pumps are, however, the same as those used in Canada.

Perhaps the most important difference between the European and Canadian built platforms is the price. Floris van Dam, speaking during the visit to Hungary before news of his departure, predicted that the European units would be 7.5 to 10 per cent cheaper than the Canadian built units. ■