

## Canton company posts 30-percent growth

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Feb. 05

[hometownlife.com](http://www.hometownlife.com)

Canton-based RepairClinic.com has witnessed 30-percent growth in just one year, creating new jobs and flourishing as a widening customer base buys replacement parts – mostly online – for do-it-yourself home projects, company officials say.

Chris Hall, company president and co-founder, confirmed sales of \$40 million to \$60 million for 2013, avoiding precise figures to keep the industry competition guessing. He projected another sharp increase this year as customers order parts to fix their own refrigerators, stoves, lawn mowers, snow blowers, garden tractors and heating and cooling units, among other items.

“Last year was the fastest growth we’ve had in 10 years,” Hall said. “We’re expecting double-digit growth this year.”

RepairClinic.com, located on Michigan Avenue west of Beck, opened in 1999 and has never faltered, posting flat sales during The Great Recession without suffering plummeting sales that might have shuttered a weaker company. It employs 132 workers.

The company hired 30 new employees – 16 full time, 14 part time – within the last year to keep pace with thousands of replacement parts that are shipped out every day, mostly by FedEx tractor-trailers, Hall said.

RepairClinic.com also has installed new conveyors, vertical storage machines and other technology to streamline its workspace, yet the company is quickly outgrowing its 86,000-square-foot building.

The company owns property adjacent to its building that could accommodate an expansion of the facility.

“It’s inevitable,” Hall said, estimating such an expansion “may be two years off.”

StellaService, an outside independent company that conducts its own research of online retailers, has awarded RepairClinic.com an “excellent” rating after analyzing customer satisfaction – a rating companies can earn, not buy.

“That was a big honor for us,” Jody Lamb, RepairClinic’s public relations manager, said.

RepairClinic.com also has earned the designation as a Google Trusted Store.

Hall said the company has worked to earn the trust of more than three million customers across the United States, Canada, U.S. territories and on military bases.

Most customers order their parts online and RepairClinic.com offers online help guides and more than 1,500 how-to videos to ease the stress of home projects. The videos have reached 24 million views, mostly on the company website and YouTube, with Lamb estimating daily views at 45,000.

Still, as many as 100 customers a day – a small fraction of the overall business – walk in to the company’s headquarters to buy replacement parts for major home appliances, outdoor power equipment and heating

and cooling systems.

Hall said the company hasn't yet begun to develop a blueprint for expanding its facility, but such plans may not be far off as RepairClinic.com continues to grow.

"We're quickly running out of space," he said.