

# Business

## Oliver is on track for record year

■ Engineering group has strong order book

■ Sales and profits dipped in recession-hit 2010

JAMES FERGUSON

**E**NGINEERING group Oliver Valves today said its strong order book puts the company on track for a record year after sales and profits were hit by the global recession during 2010.

Group turnover for the 12 months to September 30, was £33.4m, down from £42.3m a year earlier.

The Cheshire-based company blamed delays to several major overseas oil and gas projects, which impacted its pipeline and instrument valve divisions, but reported good progress in its sub-sea valves division Valvetek, which grew revenues by 38 per cent.

Group pre-tax profits were down from £7.2m to £6.1m, although the company reported gross and operating profit margins both increased due to manu-

facturing efficiencies. More than 60 per cent of orders by value came from overseas, and the group has continued to invest in its technical and sales teams abroad, particularly in the Americas, Middle East and Far East.

Chairman Michael Oliver said: "Like many businesses operating in the oil and gas supply chain, we faced a lot of pressures from around the world in the last financial year."

He added: "Our specialism and focus on designing world-class sub-sea, instrument and pipeline valves means there are very few companies who can match our product range offering."

"This, together with returning confidence in our markets and a strong start to the year, has put us firmly back on track for growth in

2011 and we are excited about the prospects ahead of us."

The company said it had a record order book at the start of the year, with new business being driven by the emerging economies putting it on track to reach revenues of £50m this year.

Oliver, which specialises in designing and manufacturing valves for the oil and gas industry, has won a number of significant contracts during the first quarter of 2011, including a £1m deal to supply sub-sea valves for a project in the Gulf of Mexico.

An £800,000 order has been placed by a major Brazilian oil company and the firm has won its first sub-sea contract in Chinese waters, worth £400,000.

The Knutsford-based group, founded by Mr Oliver in his garage in 1979, is the largest privately-owned valve maker in Europe with 250 staff in Cheshire and 600 more around the world.

It won the Manchester Evening News Business of the Year accolade in 2010 for companies with turnover of £25m-£50m.



**CONFIDENT**

Michael Oliver, of Oliver Valves, says the group is firmly back on track for growth in 2011

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