



Nicolas Frank, Managing Director and Wolfgang Frank, Owner, SchuF, which manufactures and exports specialist industrial valves worldwide from its facility in Togher. Picture: Donagh Glavin

‘Cork has always been a significant location’

As SchuF Ireland celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, Nicolas Frank talks to *Cork Biz* about the benefits of basing a company in Cork and how his business has continued to expand, despite the economic climate...

A steady supply of young entrepreneurs was the selling point for manufacturer SchuF to establish itself in Cork 20 years ago. Operating out of Togher, the German company, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, is involved in the manufacturing and exporting of specialist industrial valves worldwide. SchuF Ireland's Nicolas Frank, a great grandson of founder Josef Frank outlines that with Cork's location and the county's educated workforce, it is expected the company's turnover will increase by over 50% over the next two years.

"We export all our products to China and the Middle East and that has remained very buoyant despite the current economic climate," he says. "Operating mainly in

the chemical, pharmaceutical, oil and gas, plastics and polymer industries, our Irish facility is recognised as a hub for the design and manufacture of special valves for severe media, difficult operating environments and challenging new processes.

"These specialist areas require innovative and unique designs, demanding high performance and longevity and the use of high quality materials. Our workforce of skilled professionals work closely with colleagues in our German, UK, USA, Brazilian and Indian facilities to deliver these objectives and we are proud of our long history in Ireland and internationally."

He states that one of the current "breakthroughs" in the industry developed by SchuF at its research and

development department is a patented valve which incorporates infrared probes. "These valves enable customers in the pharmaceutical industry to take accurate real time chemical readings from the very bottom of the reactor, which is the preferred location for measuring process parameters. It is a safe and cost effective way for the customer to integrate high tech analytical probes into their process," explains Nicolas.

He adds that the accumulation of "industry knowledge", "manufacturing expertise" and "design know-how" throughout the company has furthered its development with "innovative" valve designs required for the petrochemical and related process industries.

The result of all these con-

tributing factors means, according to Nicolas, that there have been no lay-offs in the company's Cork base in the last number of years, despite the downturn. And it is estimated that the workforce of 55 will increase over the coming years, along with an expansion to the building in the south side of the city. He adds that this is based on a projected increase in business over the next two years based on opportunities in China, India and other emerging economies such as the Middle East and South Africa. "Cork has always been a significant location for SchuF and there is ongoing investment there and real space to expand. In fact, the estimated turnover at the company will reach €10million this year," he says.