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Congressman visits local truck-body company recovering from recession

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Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Santa Clarita, toured a local truck-modifying firm Monday for a first-hand look at how the economy is affecting the Santa Clarita Valley's industrial base.

McKeon visited Marathon Industries Inc. on Springbrook Avenue and learned from company President Chad Hess that industry is rebounding slowly but surely from the recession of 2007.

Marathon, a corporation based in Santa Clarita makes, assembles, installs and repairs truck bodies, trailers and transportation equipment.

Hess told the congressman how the company grew

significantly from 1993 to 2005 when it "peaked."

At that point, McKeon stopped him and said: "What you mean is you haven't peaked yet."

Hess smiled and agreed, and said: "That's right; we haven't peaked yet."

Nevertheless, Hess described the "rebounding" as difficult.

"It still feels like we're rebuilding," he said. "Some of my vendors have not rebounded as well as they should have."

Hess escorted McKeon through his noisy plant where workers were busy drilling panels on trucks and welding metal parts to truck frames.

If there was a secret to Marathon's success, it is adaptability.

"We've never been an assembly line," Hess said. "Our flexibility has enabled us to weather the storm."

Before he visited Marathon, McKeon was in Stevenson Ranch at Jake Kuredjian Park where he awarded two local war heroes who served with the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam.

Spc. Stanley W. Cockerell and Sergeant William L. Reynolds each received the Bronze Star for their meritorious service in Vietnam from Jan. 6, 1967, to Jan. 8, 1968.