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MELAKA'S LIKOM FORECASTS RM1.0 BLN IN SALES THIS YEAR

By: Yong Soo Heong

KUALA LUMPUR, April 17 (Bernama) -- Amidst the spate of poor results reported by many local companies of late, what the Likom Group of Companies has accomplished and is forecasting shines like a beacon in the spirit of "Malaysia Boleh": the Melaka-based computer peripherals manufacturer is setting its sights on RM1 billion worth of sales this year after an impressive turnover of RM860 million last year.

"We are optimistic of our sales targets following the increasing levels of deals concluded so far and the number of enquiries that have been coming our way," said Shu Tek Hong, senior vice president of Likom Technology Sdn Bhd, the company which makes high resolution colour monitors under the Original Design Manufacturer concept in the Likom Group.

The home-grown group, which is part of the Lion Group, began operations in 1992. Besides monitors, it makes an array of computer peripherals like computer casings and metal stamping parts. It also produces printed circuit boards, computer scanners, keyboards and precision injection mouldings parts.

Likom, which displayed its products at a hotel in Hannover, Germany concurrently during the recent CeBit IT and Telecommunications Trade Fair, has been swamped with enquiries and sales orders, especially for its display monitors.

Likom put on show several models, including its much-touted 17-inch flat screen monitor, which have been designed by its own local engineers and manufactured at its integrated manufacturing facility located on a 37.2 ha (92 acre) site in Cheng, Melaka.

Asked why Likom did not take part in the trade fair proper, Shu explained that the group wanted the total concentration of its potential customers and felt that a hotel setting was more conducive.

"We have taken part in CeBit before. But we don't want our potential customers to get distracted by the noise and other matters. In less distracted surroundings, our customers and ourselves will be able to discuss and negotiate to the satisfaction of both parties. We have also taken the same approach at the Comdex IT show in Las Vegas," he said in an interview.

Shu, when asked how the group was able to come out with the latest in computer monitors, "It all has to do with our R&D. We give a lot of emphasis on this. After we have concluded what will the next trend, we will focus on how best we can come out with the products."

He said when Likom has to produce for the world market, the most important prerequisite is quality. Shu said Likom's employees at its seven plants in Melaka as well as those located overseas have been drummed on the fact that they are producing for global customers, not just for their home markets.

"We want to be known as a preferred provider of IT products and services. To be able to compete against the rest of the world, we must have quality and competitive cost advantages. Quality lies in the heart of everything we do. It's a strategic thrust of our business," he said.

Shu said Likom, which has seven factories in Melaka, is banking on the growth of the Internet to drive the demand for its products further.

He added, "With more people getting on the Internet and with the Internet getting to be more interesting, there will always be increasing demand for products that can serve the users better.

"Take our monitors, for instance. Our products are ranked among the

best in the market along with similar "first tier products" of other big name computer companies."

With the trend in the United States moving towards having big-screen monitors because of the boom in the Internet, he said Likom has responded to market demand by producing them.

"I am very proud of the fact that our 17-inch monitors have been designed and produced by Malaysians. With our innovation, we have managed to reduce the overall size and yet give users the big screen facility. It just shows that we can produce for the world market," said Shu.

Hsu said the outlook for the Likom Group, which also has manufacturing plants in China and Mexico, is extremely bright because of a number of reasons. First, it makes products that are increasingly sought after by the global market.

Second, the depreciation of the ringgit has made its products far more competitive in the global market.

"We are proud to have responded to the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad to export more products to earn the country valuable foreign exchange. We feel that we can do more in the future as we have the right products for the market." -- BERNAMA

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