

## Silicon Labs adding jobs to keep up with growth

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Business may be slack in some parts of the economy, but Austin-based Silicon Laboratories Inc. is hunting for some top-quality technical workers to help it keep pace with strong growth prospects.

The chip design company, which supplies customers in consumer electronics, communications equipment, automobiles and other industries, said Wednesday it might add several dozen more workers this year.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we are over 800 (in global employment) next year," said CEO Necip Sayiner of his company, which ended 2009 with just over 730 workers, of whom about two-thirds work in Austin.

**"I have some empty floors to fill," he said, referring to vacant space in the company's headquarters on West Cesar Chavez Street downtown.**

**In Austin, the company is recruiting to fill jobs for engineers, marketing managers and Web developers.**

Silicon Labs' plans add to signs of an emerging jobs rebound in Austin. In recent weeks, a number of other tech companies have said they plan to add jobs in the coming months. Last week, Freescale Semiconductor Inc. CEO Rich Beyer said the company was on a rebound and might add production jobs later this year if demand continued to rise.

Silicon Labs reported that revenue grew 28 percent in the fourth quarter from the same quarter a year earlier, and Sayiner said signs point toward more growth in 2010.

The company had a profit of \$40.3 million, or 84 cents a share, on revenue of \$127.2 million for the quarter, compared with a profit of \$6.3 million, or 14 cents a share, on revenue of \$99.3 million a year earlier. The quarterly earnings included a one-time tax benefit.

The results, released Wednesday morning, helped the company's shares close at \$45.07, a gain of 1.6 percent .

For all of 2009, Silicon Labs reported a profit of \$73.1 million, or \$1.57 a share, on revenue of

\$441 million, compared with a profit of \$32.9 million, or 67 cents, on revenue of \$415.6 million the year before.

The company said the year was marked by strong growth across many product lines with increasing profit margins.

It ended the year with cash and investments of \$435 million, up 30 percent from 2008.

Silicon Labs expects revenue of \$120 million to \$125 million in the current quarter.

One promising new product is the company's TV tuner chip, which starts shipping to customers this quarter. Sayiner said two of the world's top five makers of flat-panel digital TVs plan to use the new chip in their sets.

The tuner chip takes the place of a complex assembly known in the electronics industry as a tuning "can." Silicon Labs says its part will save TV makers money and space while delivering improved performance and reliability for over-the-air and cable TV reception.

Some analysts continue to be impressed by the company's consistent performance.

"Silicon Labs is one of the few gold-standard growth stories in the semiconductor industry," wrote analyst Craig Berger with FBR Capital Markets.

Berger expects the company's sales could top \$535 million in 2010, adding that it has "the potential to someday generate \$1 billion in annual revenue and \$4 to \$6 in earnings per share."

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**