

WEST VIRGINIA

SPECIAL REPORT

ISSUE 5 ■ 2015

# EDGE

## THE TIDE KEEPS RISING

WEST VIRGINIA LANDS  
ANOTHER BIG INVESTMENT  
WITH NEW P&G PLANT



# OLD SALT, NEW SEASON

SEVENTH-GENERATION SALT MAKERS PUT AN ORIGINAL  
WEST VIRGINIA INDUSTRY BACK ON THE MAP

SMALL BUSINESS EDITION



During my time as Senate President and now, as Governor, I have made it a priority to improve our state's business climate and develop West Virginia's workforce to meet the long-term needs of business and industry operating here. Today's global economy is dependent on an educated, skilled and versatile workforce. In West Virginia, we are earning a national reputation for our skilled training programs and workers who are committed to getting the job done — and doing it well.

With the help of the West Virginia Workforce Planning Council, we are working together to develop and streamline a strong portfolio of programs to meet the needs of all West Virginians — from early childhood, middle school and high school to post-secondary training and opportunities at our Community and Technical Colleges and four-year higher education institutions. Whether through a certificate or apprenticeship program, a two-year or four-year degree or a specialized training course, West Virginians can achieve success in the Mountain State.

Time and time again, I've been asked about our state's workforce efforts and what we're doing to help those who may be unemployed, want to change fields or are entering the workforce for the first time. Through a number of available specialized training programs, we are helping business owners and employees develop and implement smart practices, while also offering guidance and resources to help them achieve long-term success. Throughout this process, we have worked hard to facilitate and ensure coordination between business and industry and leaders in our state's primary and post-secondary education systems.

Companies across the Mountain State are capitalizing on these offerings to train and advance their workers. Procter & Gamble, which recently announced plans to open a manufacturing facility near Martinsburg, will team with Blue Ridge Community and Technical College to train its employees. Macy's has also taken advantage of Blue Ridge's programs for its fulfillment center employees in Martinsburg. In addition, Toyota and BridgeValley Community and Technical College partner in a program called "Advanced Manufacturing Technician," or AMT. This education-to-work program gives students hands-on experience in manufacturing, while earning a two-year degree.

I am committed to continuing these valuable relationships, and our team stands ready to work with any business or industry operating in West Virginia to develop specialized training programs and increase the number of opportunities available for West Virginia workers.

Advancing our workforce through these educational partnerships and training programs is an investment with a lasting, invaluable return. Our state's continued success is built on our strong business climate and an educated, skilled workforce. I am confident that as we continue to combine our resources and work together, we can create a future that is bright and prosperous for West Virginia and her people.



Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor  
State of West Virginia

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# Old Salt, New Season

Seventh-generation salt makers put an original West Virginia industry back on the map

*by* Chelsea A. Ruby



*Like time in a bottle, the history of J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works is captured in photos and product samples from the company's archives. A shelf contains samples from different batches of the salt produced in Malden, West Virginia since the early 1800s.*

**A** rough-hewn table in the South Carolina lowlands is set with an antebellum bounty, a vision of a culinary future that reclaims the best of the past. The pork is from a free-range Berkshire hog, a breed heralded for the richness and texture of its meat for hundreds of years before industrialized pork production reduced it to a footnote. The rice is Charleston Gold, a sweet-smelling strain derived from ancient varieties that ruled the kitchens of the South before the Civil War. The tomatoes are heirloom specimens from North Carolina's Blackbird Farms. The restaurant is Husk, chef Sean Brock's high church of southern revival cuisine, where critics race to outdo each other in bestowing rave reviews and national honors (a James Beard Foundation best chef award for Brock, Bon Appetit's Best New Restaurant in America for Husk), everything on the menu originates below the Mason-Dixon line, and Brock selects each ingredient, right down to the salt, with a care and deliberativeness that must be seen to be believed.

The salt comes from here: Malden, West Virginia, on the banks of the Kanawha River. Four hundred million years ago, this mountainous land was an ocean, the Iapetus, which long-ago tectonic shifts buried under the Appalachians, locking away a literal sea of pristine salt hundreds of feet below the rugged surface. On its way from the Iapetus to Brock's table, the salt has been pumped up from the depths as a brine, purified with sunlight and gravity, harvested with implements of local wood, then packaged and shipped by seventh-generation salt makers, heirs to a legendary 19th century salt works. If heritage, artisanship, sustainability, and a sense of place are the essential desiderata of our new culinary consciousness, then J.Q. Dickinson salt may well be the perfect salt for our times. And the taste? It will change the way you think about salt forever.

There was a time when salt came from somewhere and where it came from mattered. At the 1851 London World's Fair, local salts from

around the globe vied for the title of world's finest. Kanawha salt claimed the prize. It was the pride of a region where salt once reigned supreme. The commercial salt business started here around 1800 and took off during the War of 1812, when England embargoed salt sales to the United States, spurring a search for domestic supplies. A salt boom ensued. Salt prospectors flocked to the area around what is now Malden, near Charleston, the state's capital. One was William Dickinson, who came west from near Roanoke. Dickinson's first well was piped with hollowed tree trunks and took four years to begin producing brine. He persevered and became one of the valley's leading salt makers, his furnaces running round the clock. The business passed down to his son and then his grandson, J.Q., and took the name J.Q. Dickinson & Co. By the mid-1800s, the region as a whole boasted 40 salt works shipping upwards of 150 million pounds a year.

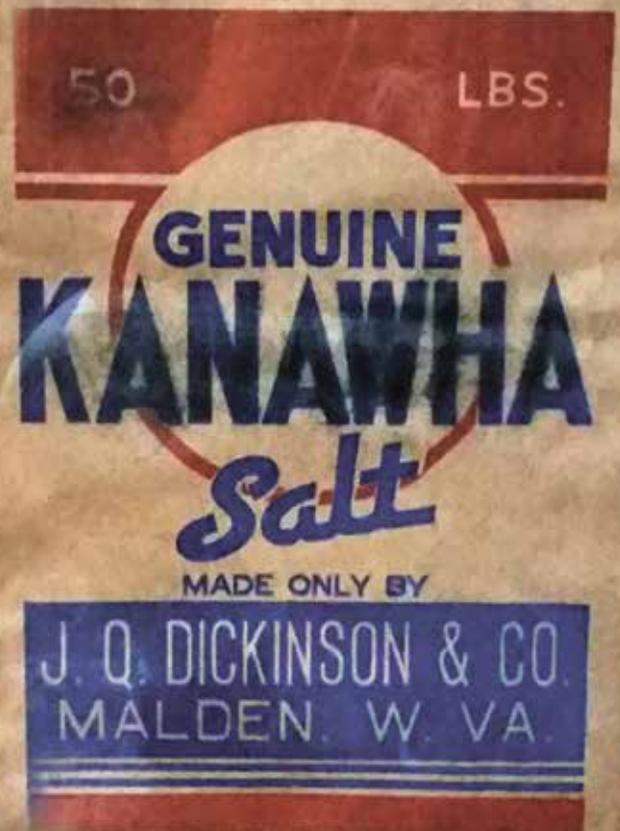
Little more than a century later, though, the Kanawha salt industry was dead, felled by powerful market forces. Cheaper competitors emerged, and with the advent of a nationwide transportation network, less efficient local and regional producers were squeezed out. By the age of TV dinners and McNuggets, the very notion of one's salt coming from some particular, known place in the world would have seemed bafflingly anachronistic. Salt came from the salt can—the dark blue cardboard cylinder with a picture of a woman holding an umbrella, one of rows and rows of identical vessels stacked on supermarket shelves. Salt was not like fine wine, shaped by the terroir of a Bordeaux or Napa Valley. It was simply salt.

This movement toward big food claimed many casualties besides Kanawha salt, of course. Over a span of decades, virtually every category of food fell under the dominion of the agricultural-industrial complex. Fruits and vegetables, grains and seeds, hogs and cattle—all were bred for size, rapid growth, long shelf life, and durability for shipment to distant lands. America was a hungry, expanding country. It



*An employee in the 1930s shows off an old drill bit.*

*Historically the salt was available in 50-pound bags, but today's consumers prefer it in slightly smaller quantities.*



**KILN DRIED**

needed food that was affordable, abundant, and available both in season and out. The market found ways to meet those needs, but at a price: forgotten along the way were thousands of strains of plants and animals that enriched the flavor of traditional American cooking.

Nancy Bruns, William Dickinson's great-great-great-granddaughter, was born as America's culinary homogenization approached its zenith. She grew up in Charleston, graduated from Bucknell University, and then, having long harbored a love of cooking, struck out for the prestigious New England Culinary Institute in Vermont. After culinary school, Bruns made her way to Highlands, North Carolina, near Asheville in that state's mountainous southwest corner, where she opened a restaurant and catering company. By the time Bruns got into the food business, a quiet revolution had begun – a counterrevolution, really, an attempt to undo some of the less salutary side effects of industrialized food. The movement's pillars included local sourcing; natural, sustainable production methods; and the rediscovery of heritage breeds and strains. Those tenets, adherents discovered, were not merely matters of ethics. They also were capable of producing extraordinarily flavorful food.

As a restaurateur and trained chef, Bruns had a front-row seat for the beginning of this artisanal movement. There was a flourishing of artisanal cheeses, beers, cured meats, olive oils, and on and on. And then there was salt. Bruns had always believed that salt was the most essential ingredient in cooking, and as specialty salts began trickling into the market, she found herself devoting more and more of her pantry to them. She was aware of her own family's history in the salt business, but only in general terms, and at first she did not make the connection between her heritage and the growing share of her cooking budget that was going to salt.

But in 2012, inspiration struck. "As I started to see more artisanal producers in this country," Bruns says, "it just started to hit me – why aren't we making salt?" Her husband Carter was finishing a doctoral thesis on the industrialization of the Kanawha Valley. Salt was the region's earliest industry, so Carter was thinking and talking about it a lot. Bruns asked him if her family's salt business had ended because it ran out of brine. Carter assured her that there was more brine left than anyone could possibly ever use. Bruns response: "You know what that means, don't you? We're going to make salt."

Bruns' first call was to her brother, Lewis Payne, a Charleston attorney and businessman. "I knew he was a great foodie person," Bruns says, "and would understand the market I was trying to go for." Payne was intrigued. "It was a big idea," he recalls now, laughing. "It was also a big risk." The family's salt works had been out of business for decades. Could he and Bruns still find the same brine source that fed the old Dickinson salt works? Would the salt taste as good to modern mouths? Could they find enough customers willing to pay a premium price for their small-batch salt? He and Bruns did some homework

*Carrying trays of salt ready for the final drying process, Nancy Bruns, chief executive officer, and Lewis Payne, chief operating officer, are hands on executives at J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works.*





*Jars of J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works on display and ready for market feature lids made in Wheeling, West Virginia. The owners of the company work with many state and regional vendors.*

and weighed the risks. “Eventually,” Payne says, “I said yes.”

Once the decision was made to go forward, the name for the new venture was obvious. “A big part of the story of the product we wanted to make was our family’s heritage in the salt business,” Bruns says. The new effort would take an old name: J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works.

The brine came quickly. Bruns and Payne found old Dickinson well logs from the 1800s that told them exactly how deep to drill. The harder part was devising a production process that fit the company they envisioned. Their forebears boiled the brine to evaporate the water and leave the salt, a process fueled initially by burning wood and then, after every available tree was devoured, by consuming mountains of coal. For the new J.Q. Dickinson, Bruns and Payne sought a more minimal approach. “We believed from the beginning that the way we made the salt was just as important as the way it ultimately tasted,” said Bruns. “We thought a lot about sustainability. It mattered to us and it mattered to the people we hoped would be our customers.” The siblings decided to try evaporating the brine using only sunlight. They built greenhouses for the task, to maximize heat



*Meticulous records from the founding family members provided valuable insight as the brine wells were brought back into production.*

and minimize evaporation times. Brine is pumped into custom-built beds in the greenhouses. As it evaporates, impurities sink to the bottom, where they are removed and directed to other uses; one byproduct is a natural coagulant that can be used to make tofu or ricotta cheese. The salinity of the disappearing brine is monitored; when it reaches an ideal level, the brine is pumped into another greenhouse and spread very thin, so that the finished salt will crystalize. The process takes at least five weeks, longer if the weather is cool or cloudy.

To Bruns and Payne—and their growing legion of fans—the wait is worth it. “I was blown away by it,” says Bruns of the pair’s first successful batch. “I mean, I cried. There were tears. I tasted it and said,



*Salt crystals are hand gathered and sorted before packaging and distribution.*

‘Oh, my gosh, this is so good. I can’t believe this is our salt that is so good.’”

That was two years ago. Bruns’ elation has since come to be shared by master chefs and home cooks alike. “Sean Brock,” of Husk, “tasted it and said I’ll buy it by the truckload,” Bruns says. “He loves it and buys it for both his restaurants.” Another loyal customer is Spike Gjerde, owner of renowned Baltimore farm-to-table restaurant Woodberry Kitchen and winner of the 2015 James Beard Award for Best Chef Mid-Atlantic category. “Spike was looking for salt for seven years,” says Bruns. “He heard about us and got in his car the next day, drove down here and spent four hours with me going through the process and chatting. Now it’s the only salt he uses.” Many acclaimed Charleston restaurants use Dickinson salt, among them South Hills Market and Café and Bridge Road Bistro. And beyond restaurant kitchens, shoppers in West Virginia and around the country are keeping the salt flying off store shelves. To meet the demand, Bruns says, J.Q. Dickinson quadrupled its initial capacity just two years into its existence. On the financial front, she expects to break even as early as this year.

Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette says West Virginia has a lot of room for growth in this market. “One of our state’s great qualities is that so much of it is still natural and unspoiled,” says Burdette. “There’s an authenticity to that, an integrity, that can easily lend itself to artisanal production and heirloom brands. And we’re close to most of the largest markets in the country. I’d love to see more West Virginia businesses follow the path that Nancy and Lewis have figured out. They’re showing off our state in a different light, perhaps, than a lot of people have perceived it—and the image they’re putting on display is one that points the way to the future.”

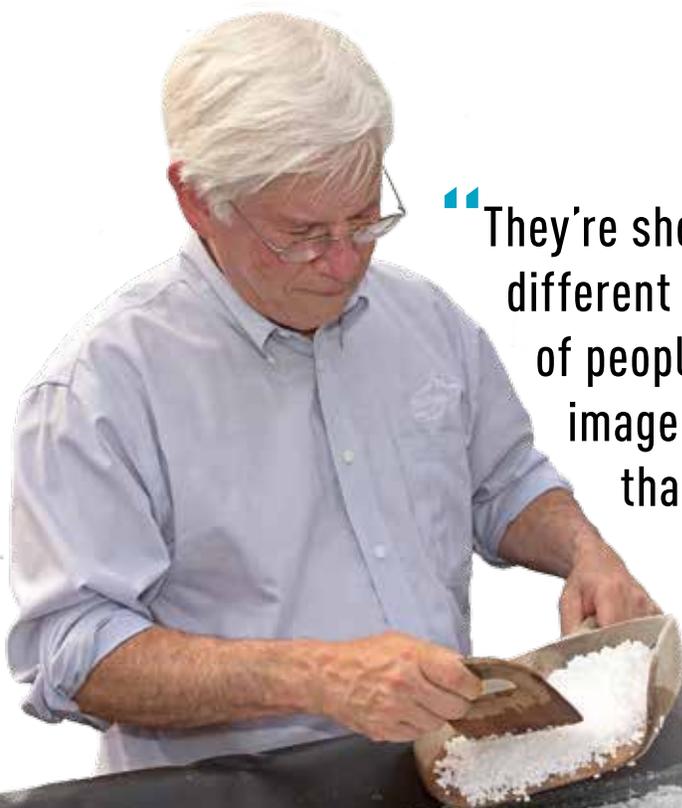
For Bruns and Payne, the future seems boundless. Demand is soaring. “We’re incredibly fortunate: the salt sells itself,” Bruns says. “I don’t really have to beat down doors at this point. People are coming to us.” The company is adding new restaurant and retail customers at a rate of 100 a year.

“We are trying to be disciplined about how we grow,” Bruns continues. “We don’t want to grow too quickly. Sustainability is important. What sells the salt, besides the taste, is the honesty of how we make it; if we start compromising that for more production, then we won’t be here long.” In the hands of passionate stewards like Bruns and Payne, the reincarnated J.Q. Dickinson may well outlast the original. **E**

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**Keith Burdette**, cabinet secretary  
WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

*Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette tries his hand gathering salt using a hand-crafted scraper and scoop, the tools of the salt maker’s trade.*





# THE TIDE KEEPS RISING

West Virginia lands another big investment  
with new P&G plant

by Kara N. Moore

**P**rocter & Gamble is a quintessential American company. Its corporate footprint is international: P&G has operations in 70 countries and does \$83 billion in annual sales. Of the world's 7 billion people, 5 billion of them use a P&G product. But P&G's roots, its heritage and its culture are all the stuff of the American Dream.

Founded in 1837 by two immigrants in Ohio who made the most basic of household goods – candles and soap – P&G has grown steadily over nearly 200 years to become the second-largest consumer goods company in the United States. It's done so by staying committed to both its customers and its employees as it innovates to bring advanced products to market quickly and efficiently.





*William Procter, left and James Gamble, right, never could have imagined the success of their partnership when they formed their candle and soap business in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1837.*

Now, West Virginia will be part of that story. The company announced in early 2015 that it will build a \$500 million manufacturing plant in Berkeley County, positioning West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle as a critical point for a new era of P&G.

"Procter & Gamble is one of the most reputable companies in the world, and we are excited to welcome them to West Virginia," Governor Earl Ray Tomblin says. "For years we've been working to create a business climate that makes West Virginia a national and global competitor for new investments, and companies around the world are noticing the changes we've made. We are showing these major corporations that West Virginia is a good place to do business and the right place to make an investment."

Cincinnati-based P&G has a lineup of more than 100 brands that includes some of the most recognizable names in household and personal care products: Tide, Bounty, Pampers, Crest and the company's oldest brand, Ivory. Consumers across the globe rely on P&G products every day for their most basic hygiene needs. Tide, in its iconic orange and blue packaging, is the most popular brand of laundry detergent in the United States, with sales more than twice that of its nearest competitor.

Twenty-three of P&G's brands generate more than \$1 billion each in annual sales, and another 14 do at least half a billion annually. P&G sells products in 180 countries and has a market capitalization greater than the gross domestic products of many of them.

But every company has to start somewhere, and P&G's beginnings were as humble as any.

William Procter was a candlemaker from

England, and James Gamble was a soapmaker from Ireland. The two became brothers-in-law when they married sisters after immigrating to Cincinnati. It was their father-in-law, also a soapmaker, who persuaded them to go into business together – a savvy move as soap and candles of the time used the same raw materials. Today we call that supply chain economics. Candles and bar soap were the most fundamental of household supplies in the mid-19th century, a time well before electric light and household appliances. Still, their success was far from assured as they had plenty of competition from other candle and soapmakers in Cincinnati. They formed Procter & Gamble on Halloween in 1837 with \$7,192.24 in combined assets.

Over the years the company has pioneered nearly as many business strategies as new products as it stays agile to change with advances in society and the consumers it serves. Their market research department and brand management systems were ahead of their time, and a decision to sell directly to retailers instead of going through wholesalers fundamentally changed the grocery trade. The wholesale system was causing uneven seasonal demand that forced layoffs, and P&G had decided early on to make treatment of its employees a high



Nagel Photography / Shutterstock.com

For many years, Procter & Gamble used advertising in grocery stores, such as this iconic Ivory Soap sign to make sure shoppers easily located their products.

priority. The company's articles of incorporation from 1919 include the directive that the "interests of the company and its employees are inseparable," according to company documents.

True to its word, P&G has had a remarkably stable network of factories. The company has 29 American plants in 21 states. The West Virginia facility will be only the second new manufacturing location the company has built since 1971; the other was a Salt Lake City plant that opened in 2011. West Virginia's \$500 million facility will be

designed to manufacture products in multiple categories at the same site. It will be part of P&G's new distribution center network serving the eastern United States, which includes large facilities in Georgia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The new network will position P&G to deliver products to 80 percent of its East Coast consumers within one day, allowing the company to be more responsive than ever to fluctuations in demand.

The project was announced in February 2015, but West Virginia and Berkeley County officials began working to secure the facility in 2013 under the codename Project Independence. West Virginia



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**Earl Ray Tomblin**  
GOVERNOR OF WEST VIRGINIA

State and local officials teamed up in their efforts to recruit P&G. Pictured, left to right, are Kris Hopkins, Director of Business Industrial Development, W.Va. Development Office; Keith Burdette, Cabinet Secretary, W.Va. Dept. of Commerce; Steve Christian, Executive Director, Berkeley County Development Authority; W. Va. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin; Tony Zelenka, President, Berkeley County Development Authority; Doug Copenhaver, President, Berkeley County Council; and Todd Hooker, Senior Manager of Financial Programs and National Accounts, W.Va. Development Office.



competed aggressively for the new factory, beating out some tough competition. While other states might have made more financially aggressive bids, West Virginia offered something even better: direct access to decision-makers, a business-friendly tax climate and the perfect location.

Tabler Station Industrial Park sits along Interstate 81 in Berkeley County, just south of Martinsburg. The site has rail access to CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines and is near both Interstate 81, a prominent north-south route, and Interstate 70, which runs east-west from Maryland to Utah. West Virginia's extensive waterways also provide easy and affordable shipping options.

The cost of doing business in West Virginia is low: nearly 14 percent below the national average, West Virginia's business tax burden is lower than all its neighbors'. The cost of electricity is 33 percent below the national average, and the cost of living in West Virginia is 14 percent below the national average. What's more, West Virginia's workforce has the fifth lowest turnover rate in the manufacturing industry.

"P&G chose us because we had the right location for them and a great workforce," Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette says. "West Virginia has

made huge strides in creating a workforce ready for skilled manufacturing jobs. The P&G jobs will be high-paying, fully-benefitted jobs, and that will have an impact on the community for years to come, while also raising West Virginia's profile in the manufacturing sector."

The plant is a capital investment of historic proportions for West Virginia. When the plant is completed, P&G will become one of the state's larger private employers. Construction is set to begin in October 2015 and will create about 1,000 jobs. When the facility opens in 2017, P&G will employ about 700 permanent full-time skilled workers. P&G began work with local career and technical centers immediately after the announcement to start training workers for careers with P&G.

State and local development officials hope the P&G project will spur further development in and around Tabler Station. And the facility itself could grow beyond the scope of the initial investment. According to company documents filed with the Berkeley County Planning Commission, the facility has the potential to grow to over 4 million square feet—that's 83 football fields—and could employ as many as 1,100 workers if the company decides to

expand to maximize the site's capacity.

"This really positive economic news is happening in a part of the state that is our second strongest economic region," says economist John Deskins of West Virginia University's Bureau of Economic Research. "In economics, we have virtuous cycles and vicious cycles. Vicious cycles are hard to turn around, but when you have a virtuous cycle happening like the Eastern Panhandle, it feeds on itself. People want to move to places with economies that are strong."

Deskins said the economic impact of the P&G plant would reach into other parts of West Virginia, but it will pack a major punch in and around the Eastern Panhandle, where the effect of 700 jobs on the local economy will be tangible. "Bringing additional income means spending more on housing, more on restaurants, more on gas. Small businesses and large businesses all benefit, and it's cultivating a healthy climate for small businesses."

Procter & Gamble has made a 50-year commitment to its Eastern Panhandle site. Workers who start right out of school might even be able to spend their entire careers working for a blue-chip company at home in West Virginia. For a state that has long been synonymous with natural resource extraction and has pushed to diversify its workforce in recent years, that's no small feat. But West Virginia is changing, and P&G's investment is a sign of the times. "Procter & Gamble joins nationally and internationally recognized companies like Toyota, Quad Graphics, Gestamp, Pietro Fiorentini and Southwestern Energy who already call West Virginia home," Governor Tomblin says. "We look forward to continuing these partnerships, which will provide quality career opportunities and good-paying jobs for hardworking West Virginians now and for years to come." **E**

## Why companies like *P&G* are moving to West Virginia

- Low cost of doing business — nearly 14 percent below the national average and lower than all neighboring states
- Strategic location within an eight-hour drive of more than half the United States population and more than a third of the Canadian market
- Electricity rates more than 33 percent below the national average
- World-class workforce with one of the lowest employee turnover rates in the country
- Pro-growth tax cuts, eliminating approximately \$180 million in business tax burden last year and more than \$660 million in the past eight years
- Workers compensation reform that has saved employers over \$280 million since the fund was privatized in 2006
- Fiscally responsible state government, with a Fitch credit rating of AA+ for general obligation debt and an overall stable rating outlook
- Cost of living 14 percent below the national average
- High quality of life, with low crime and unparalleled recreational opportunities



*SustainU CEO Chris Yura meets with West Virginia Small Business Development Center business coach Sharon Stratton. The Morgantown based company produces environmentally responsible garments that are sold all over the world.*

# Small BUSINESSES: The Gears That Make WEST VIRGINIA GO

ENTREPRENEURS DRIVE  
LOCAL ECONOMIES

by Leslie Fitzwater Smithson

**I**t's Saturday morning, and you're driving down Main Street. You pass the gas station that still offers full-service fill-ups and make a mental note to top off your tank on the way home. Up the block is the family-owned pizza parlor where your mom took you as a kid—the same one you and your high school friends walked to for lunch, where you pick up dinner at least once a month. At the stoplight is the hardware store that repaired your lawnmower last summer, and beside it is the hair salon. As you pull up to the door, your son hops out

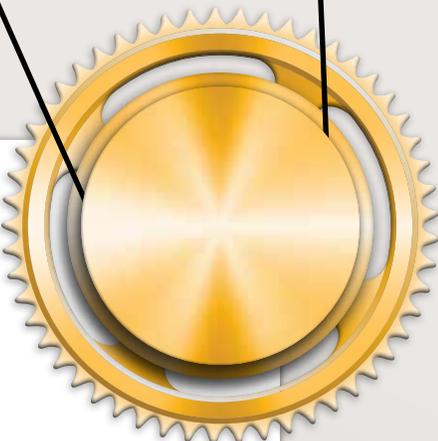


“In West Virginia, small business is big business. Small businesses are major job contributors that make the economy of our state hum every day.”

**Keith Burdette**, cabinet secretary  
WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

of the car. “I’ll be back in 30 minutes,” you shout after him and then drive away to drop your daughter off at her dance class. Your son is too cool to go to the hair stylist who gave him his first cut; instead, he goes to her husband, a part-time barber who works in the shop evenings and Saturdays. The barber’s son, who spends the morning sweeping the floor after each haircut, plays on your son’s baseball team – the one sponsored by a local law firm – and when you return to pick up your son, both boys pile in the backseat. You drop them off at baseball practice, pick up your daughter from dance class and head back to the salon for your turn in the chair.

When you think about small business, something like the scenario above might be the first to come to mind – and with good reason. Traditional Main Street shops like hair salons, barbers, pizza places, hardware stores, law firms and dance studios make up a great number of small businesses, providing important products, services and jobs to their local communities.



In the past four years, the West Virginia Small Business Development Center has helped clients access nearly **\$75 MILLION** IN CAPITAL, create and retain more than **3,000 JOBS**, and start nearly **300 NEW BUSINESSES** in the Mountain State.

And small business is so much more than that. It’s daycare providers and coffee shops, convenience stores and national chain franchises. It’s photographers, insurance agents, attorneys and mechanics. They are construction companies and potato chip makers and sawmills. They

create new products and improve old ones. Small businesses are deeply rooted in our communities. They are neighbors and friends.

The numbers tell the story: West Virginia's small businesses employ more than 300,000 people, accounting for 42 percent of the state's total workforce. That's more jobs than those provided by large businesses, which employ 38 percent of the state's total workforce, and double the number of government positions.

"In West Virginia, small business is big business," says Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette. "Small businesses are major job contributors that make the economy of our state hum every day."

By definition, a small business is any company that employs fewer than 500 people. Consider how many businesses you deal with in a week or a month that fall into that category. According to the United States Small Business Administration, the majority of small businesses in West Virginia employ fewer than 20 people. Nearly 110,000 people work for companies with between five and 19 employees.

Nearly everyone at some point dreams of opening a small business, of being his own boss. It sounds easy: Take grandma's carrot cake recipe, the one everybody raves about, and use it as the foundation for your cupcake empire. Or be the person to actually build that product you know will be the next big thing. But making your dream of starting a small business a reality takes a lot more than just a secret family recipe or an ingenious idea – although either of those is a place to start. No matter how good your product or service is, the business side of small business takes not only a spark of genius and hard work, but also planning and contacts.

## HOW CAN THE **SMALL BUSINESS Development Center** HELP YOU?

### THE WEST VIRGINIA SBDC PROVIDES:

- Low-cost training in business fundamentals
- Free, one-on-one instruction with credentialed business coaches
- Coaches' experience ranges from exporting, innovation, technology and economic development, to finance, management, marketing and entrepreneurship

### BUSINESS COACHES CAN HELP YOU:

- Meet your goals
- Develop strategies to start or expand your business
- Get marketing assistance
- Start projects and effectively manage them
- Grow your business

QUESTIONS?



*Business*  
Call the **Ask Me! Line**  
**888-982-7232** or  
visit **WVSBDC.org**



## THE BUSINESS SIDE OF DANCE

In August 2010 at age 23, Bridget Rowsey turned her love of dance into a career, opening Bridget's Dance Academy in Huntington. Rowsey, who holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Marshall University, says even with her degree she needed assistance. "When you step out on your own there are things you can't prepare for," Rowsey says. She teamed up with a business coach from the West Virginia Small Business Development Center and hasn't looked back since.

Within three years, the academy's enrollment grew beyond its location's capacity. Rowsey developed a business plan to move Bridget's Dance Academy to a new, larger location. There, she quickly exceeded her goal of 200 students and now is at capacity with 300. "I honestly did not expect to outgrow the second location," she says. "But it's a good problem to have." Today, Rowsey is considering options that include expanding the current space, building a new academy or starting a second location in the tri-state area.

Bridget's Dance Academy employs 11 instructors who teach a variety of dance, including ballet, jazz, contemporary, hip-hop and tap, along with boys' hip-hop classes and mommy-and-me sessions. The academy also trains students for dance competitions, including team, solo, duet and trio categories.

It's a great success story, and one people are taking note of – last year, Rowsey was honored by the federal Small Business Administration as West Virginia's Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

“Bridget has done all the right things to make this company grow and become a great part of our community.”

**Amber Wilson**, business coach  
WEST VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

*Bridget Rowsey checks the form of one of her dancers at Bridget's Dance Academy in Huntington.*





*Isabella Yosuico and family with Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin before the 2015 State of the State address. Gov. Tomblin highlighted the success of her innovative small business during his address.*



## DIFFERENT BY DESIGN

Isabella Yosuico is used to challenges. As an expectant mother, she found out at her first prenatal checkup that her unborn son probably had a genetic condition. Yosuico says the rest of her pregnancy was tough. “I’d always felt different myself and had learned to embrace that, concluding that in fact, we are all different by design,” Yosuico says. “Even so, I was afraid, confused and sometimes angry. I was afraid for my unborn child and what he might face in life.”

When he was born, the diagnosis was confirmed: Isaac has Trisomy 21, better known as Down Syndrome. Children with Down Syndrome face unique challenges, including hypotonia, or poor muscle tone, which can delay physical development. After Yosuico learned from Isaac’s physical therapist that he had hypotonia, she went home and got to work. Using leftover fleece and play sand, Yosuico constructed tiny wrist and ankle weights for Isaac to wear during structured and casual play. The result was increased strength, particularly in his arms, legs and abdomen. At their next appointment, the physical therapist was impressed and urged Yosuico to explore opportunities to manufacture the weights to benefit other children with poor muscle tone, including those with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and autism spectrum disorders.

“I’d been spinning my wheels for some time. I couldn’t find anyone to help me move forward. It’s no exaggeration to say MightyTykes wouldn’t be here without the help of our business coach and the Small Business Development Center.”

**Isabella Yosuico**, founder  
MIGHTYTYKES

She did just that. In 2011, Yosuico founded MightyTykes Infant and Child Weights. She began a market trial the next year, using prototypes she created in her basement. The business has taken off. Today, MightyTykes weights are used nationwide by thousands of parents and therapists to help children with muscle problems.



*An employee of SustainU prepares t-shirts on the silkscreen press. The garments are made of recycled cotton and polyester, which meet the company's goal to produce ecologically-friendly products made in the United States.*

## MADE IN AMERICA

Niche products are big business in West Virginia. Niche producers specialize by making a single type or limited line of products. Niche products often result from an “Aha!” moment, a flash of inspiration or insight essential to the creation of new merchandise or services.

“I asked myself, ‘What if clothing could be more sustainable? What if I could make clothing and help people in the process?’” These were the thoughts that inspired Chris Yura to start his business.

His solution was to create SustainU, a company that makes t-shirts from 100 percent recycled fabrics. Those fabrics, which are made of recycled cotton and polyester, are used to create apparel that is comfortable, durable and affordable.

Recent studies show 97.5 percent of all apparel sold in America is imported. Yura is doing his part to reduce that percentage. All SustainU products are made in the United States. The company has invested in a network of domestic manufacturers that cut and sew the products. Sales, printing and distribution are handled by a staff of 23 at SustainU’s national headquarters in Morgantown.

When Yura started SustainU in 2009, the company posted sales of \$50,000; in five short years, that amount grew to \$1.3 million. Today,

SustainU ships to all 50 states and exports its products to Canada, Australia and Europe. The company really hit it big when it was chosen to create the official t-shirts for the 2015 College Football Playoff National Championship. The future is looking bright with an already long list of notable customers that include Ben & Jerry’s, Budweiser, Ford, West Virginia University and Yura’s alma mater, the University of Notre Dame. **E**

“Chris was early to recognize a market for American-made clothing constructed from recycled fabrics, and SustainU is on the leading edge of clothing technology. It has been a rewarding experience to work with Chris and his innovative team.”

**Sharon Stratton**, business coach

WEST VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER



# From lemonade stand to **LEADING BUSINESS COACHES**

Lots of businesses start with the seed of a great idea, but Kristina Oliver knows firsthand that to grow, a business needs the entrepreneur's sweat equity and know-how.

"Entrepreneurship is an action verb. You want to be doing."

Oliver spent much of her career as an entrepreneur before becoming the director of the West Virginia Small Business Development Center. When she took the helm of the center in 2010, she transformed what was then known as a training organization into a business coaching network to support small business owners.

"Business owners have to think of their business coach as being just as valuable as their accountant or attorney," Oliver says.

The center has team members dispersed throughout the state providing business coaching, training and guidance to the owner of your favorite coffee spot and the small manufacturer located in your county's business park. The center's more than 20 coaches collaborate with individuals who want to build or expand their businesses in West Virginia.

"Business owners are not capitalized to afford this type of consultancy," Oliver says. "We've got small business in

West Virginia, but we need to be attracting more because once people come to West Virginia, they want to live here," Oliver says.

A self-described "boomerang," Oliver has left the state a few times but always found her way home to West Virginia. Through her career in the private sector, Oliver created businesses in manufacturing, advertising, consulting and the creative arts. These roles have given her ample opportunity to learn by doing. She is now able to share her experiences with business owners throughout the state.

Oliver recognized and nurtured her entrepreneurial spirit early in life. "I was always artistic, and I was a lemonade-stand kid," Oliver says, "but my dad advised I might not be able to make a living cutting and pasting."

She went to college to pursue an art degree. A well-timed internship with a family-owned sign company in Indianapolis spoke to Oliver's need for artistic expression and creative, hands-on work. The time spent with the business owner developed into a mentorship. The experience inspired Oliver to open her own graphic design and sign business at the age of 23.

The business prospered and expanded into manufacturing. Eight years later, Oliver got the privilege of helping her former

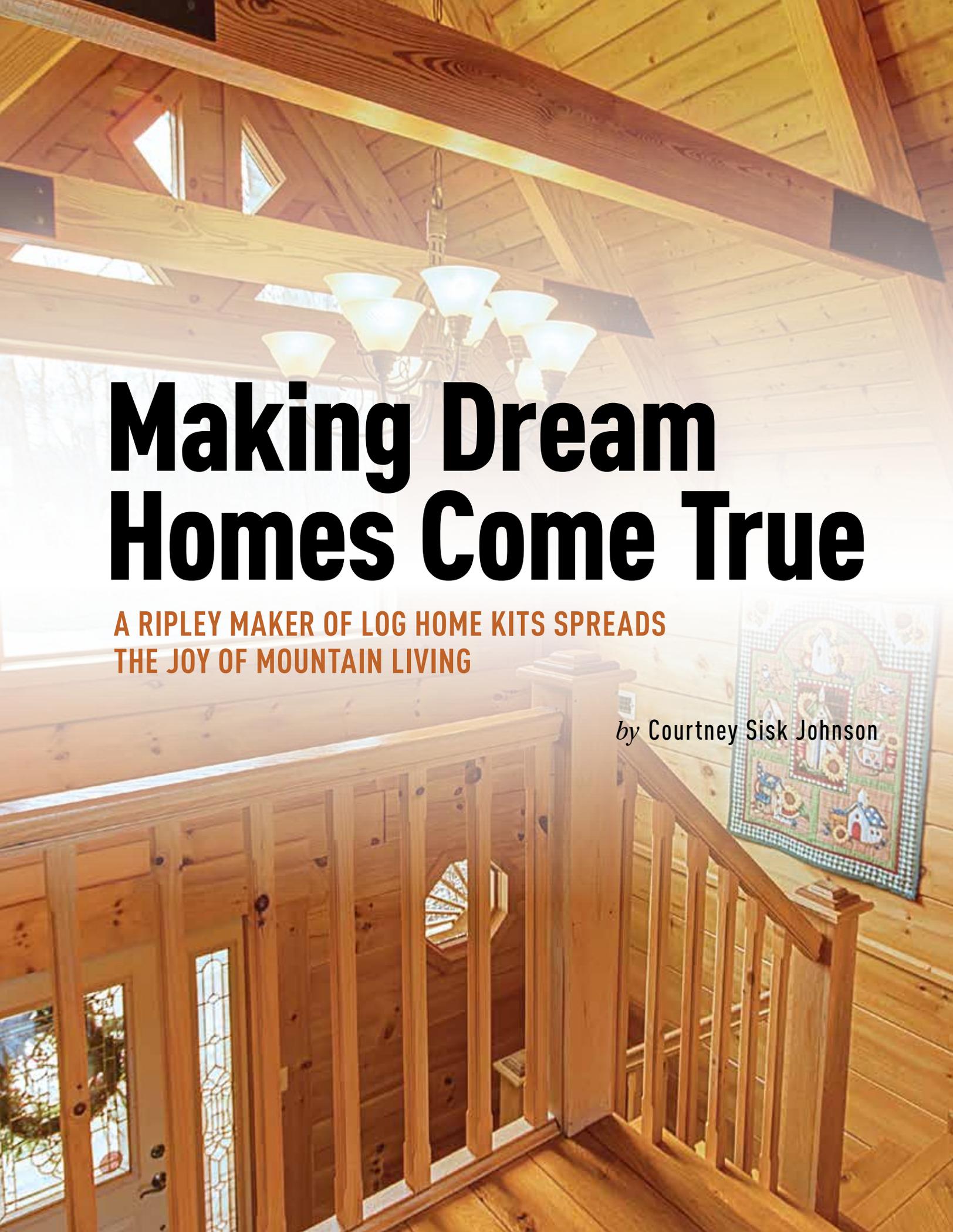
mentor — from the other side of the aisle. Together, they reimagined the sign company where she got her start and elevated it to new success. That reversal of roles taught Oliver a love of entrepreneurship and coaching.

"We want to elevate skill levels and the awareness of why this is so important to our business owners," Oliver says. "They need to know they don't have to do this, nor should they do this, by themselves. The West Virginia Small Business Development Center is here to help. Let's grow companies that have succession plans. Repeatable, sustainable entrepreneurship is the big picture."

**"The West Virginia Small Business Development Center is here to help."**

**Kristina Oliver**, state director  
WEST VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER



The background image shows a rustic interior of a log home. The ceiling is made of light-colored wood with dark wooden beams. A chandelier with several glowing white shades hangs from the ceiling. In the foreground, there is a wooden railing with vertical balusters. To the right, a colorful quilted tapestry is hanging on the wall. The overall atmosphere is warm and cozy.

# Making Dream Homes Come True

A RIPLEY MAKER OF LOG HOME KITS SPREADS  
THE JOY OF MOUNTAIN LIVING

*by* Courtney Sisk Johnson



**P**icture a log cabin nestled deep in a forest: boots lined up by the door, fishing rods leaning on rustic walls made of neatly stacked Eastern white pine, and a curl of smoke rising from the chimney. It's a distinctly Appalachian scene, but thanks to a West Virginia company, it could be almost anywhere, from Jamaica to Japan.

What started as a test project in Wirt County in 1978 is now Appalachian Log Structures, a thriving small business with headquarters in Ripley and a manufacturing facility two miles off Interstate 77 in Princeton. Founder Fletcher Parsons' vision was to produce high-quality log homes in West Virginia that could be assembled anywhere in the world. The company sells kits with pre-cut and numbered logs from which consumers can build anything from a simple cabin getaway to a 5,000-square-foot dream home.

Most of the logs for the homes come from Eastern white pine trees that grow within 100 miles of Princeton. The species is plentiful in the Appalachian Mountains and is well-suited for log homes, because it grows tall and straight and is easy to stain. An Eastern white pine that's 100 feet tall will yield about 80 feet of wood, which ends up in six log pieces. It takes around 50 trees to complete the average home.

Customers can buy the logs and build according to their own plans or choose from around 75 stock plans that can be customized. The kits range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

"Our standard models are an idea, a starting point," company president Doug Parsons says. "Customers see the exterior pictures of the model and they'll start developing that plan to match their property and their personal taste. We help them,

but the customer is the architect. We make changes until they're satisfied."

The first step is finishing the plans, then the wood is cut and the kit is shipped about three months later. Then the contractor takes over, and that job is much easier because of what Parsons and his crew have already done.

"We pre-cut and number the parts and pieces so the contractor doesn't have to figure it out," he says. "They can pretty much take the pieces out of the bundle and assemble it without doing much cutting or manufacturing at the home site. That helps the project progress more quickly, which can make a big difference to a contractor. If he uses our kits, he might be able to build six or eight houses in a year instead of three or four."

Doug Parsons says the company began when his dad did a little research.

"He graduated from West Virginia University with a forestry degree and was already in the wood manufacturing business, making farm fence posts and utility poles," Parsons says. "His company was looking for other products they could sell. Log home kits were a unique product, and they were being built everywhere."

Parsons recounts that his father said, "This looks like something we can do. We already handle the timbers, and we already have the ability to cut specific sizes and lengths."

Doug had grown up doing carpentry and was just beginning his career. "My dad and I talked several times about designing log homes," Parsons says. "Then we set out and built a couple in Wirt County. From that we developed a marketing plan and put together a sales team, and next thing you know we were advertising and selling log homes."

Those simple beginnings grew into a company that now includes two more of Fletcher Parsons' children on its management team. Doug's sister started out as a sales representative and gradually took on advertising responsibilities. Doug's brother

*This Appalachian Log Structures' model home features exposed beams and a lofted ceiling. Wood details in every room carry the rustic feeling throughout the home.*



**From left to right:** The great room of this model home is two stories tall with an A-frame design. The dining area is cozy with lower ceilings and exposed beams. A porch swing is a perfect spot to relax. This main-floor bedroom mixes drywall with wood timbers for a serene balance.



also works in sales and manages the independent representatives. Fletcher Parsons died in 2010, but his children have kept his labor of love going strong.

“It meant a lot to my dad to have something to leave to his kids,” Parsons says. “It was something we could do together. I was more hands-on; he was more hands-off, so that worked well. It was nice to share with our dad, and I was very fortunate because I enjoyed working with him. He had a great personality and attracted good people. He was a natural in front of a group of people, talking about log homes and wood.”

The elder Parsons’ message brought in customers from all walks of life, from first-time home builders to doctors building their third.

“They’re people who have dreamed of having a log home, and they like the rustic surroundings of the wood, not so much backwoods-rustic but

elegant-rustic,” Parsons says. “They have dreamed about it, planned for it, saved for it, have actually gone out and searched for the perfect piece of property where they can build their dream home.”

Being part of that dream is one of the best things about Parsons’ small business.

“Our customers are passionate about it. They don’t just drive around saying, ‘Where are the log homes?’ and pick one that’s already built. They have a vision and they make an effort to bring that to life,” he says. “It goes from, ‘Where are we going to build it?’ to ‘Where are we going to sit the house? Which direction? What’s the view? How are we going to design our living room or master bedroom or kitchen or open decks or patios?’ They make choices concerning each and every item that goes into their home.”

Parsons praises the company’s 20 employees, who he says are the heart of what makes the company successful.

“We’ve benefited significantly from the West Virginians who work for us, their abilities and capacity to help us build our company,”



“We’ve benefited significantly from the West Virginians who work for us, their abilities and capacity to help us build our company.”

**Doug Parsons**, president  
APPALACHIAN LOG STRUCTURES



*This Appalachian Log Structures model home is one of more than 60 predesigned floor plans.*

Parsons says. “We send our customers questionnaires after each sale. Some of the best remarks are about the people they’ve worked with here. It’s very common for our customers to say everybody was helpful and had an impact on the completion of their home.”

Those workers and others over the years have manufactured more than 3,900 kits and shipped them all over the country and the world, including Japan, China, Australia, Mexico, Canada and Jamaica. The state has helped make exports possible for this small business.

“We’ve worked with state agencies such as the West Virginia Development Office to go after export opportunities,” Parsons says. “We’ve attended some international trade shows, and we’ve worked with the West Virginia Economic Development Authority to get low-interest loans for our manufacturing facility.”

With support from these state agencies, Parsons has plans to keep growing his business.

“We’re trying to get a feel as to where in the East it would be easy for us to supply and service our product in the areas that are growing,” he says. “We need to focus on increasing our sales in those areas.”

While there are ups and downs in the life of any business, Parsons says the ups make it all worthwhile.

“There’s nothing like the satisfaction of a customer saying, ‘The materials were great. We have a beautiful home,’ and they invite us to take pictures so we can display them,” he says. “Owning a small business can be hard. But it’s a challenge and we look forward to challenges. If it were easy everyone would be doing it. If you want to open a small business, don’t let the obstacles get in the way of your dream.” ■



# THE PROCESS



# A **WORLD** of Opportunity

## WEST VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESSES DISCOVER INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

by Catherine Zacchi

**T**hink of a country—any country on almost any continent. Chances are a West Virginia small business is exporting products there. From marbles in South Africa to power converters in India, products from the Mountain State are finding their way around the world. West Virginia's exports represent a diverse array of consumer and industrial products, including craft accessories, truck parts, building materials and more.

The West Virginia Development Office began offering support to businesses entering the export market 30 years ago when it sent a delegation to Japan, Taiwan and Korea to promote the export of hardwood products in 1985. A few small businesses were already exporting on their own, but the state

began efforts to promote West Virginia companies abroad with that trip. Since then, small- to mid-size companies in West Virginia have exported goods to just about every continent. The state's businesses export to more than 145 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. In 2014, the top five export destinations were Canada, China, the Netherlands, Brazil and Italy.

"These exporting small businesses show the world that West Virginia has the quality products and workforce to compete in the global marketplace," says Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. "They make a significant contribution to West Virginia's growing economy. Wherever you go in the world today you will find a piece of West Virginia."



*Precision and attention to detail are demonstrated by FCX Systems employee Greta Swanson as she finishes wiring a converter unit. The power converters manufactured in Morgantown are used all over the world by the military, commercial airlines and airports to help aircraft power up regardless of their location.*

## POWERING OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD

Savvy international travelers know they have to pack power converters for their hair dryers and phone chargers, but they probably don't think about what happens when their airplane arrives at a foreign airport. Fortunately, FCX Systems products are there when the plane rolls up to the gate.

Morgantown-based FCX is the world's leading manufacturer of solid-state frequency converters and ground power support for military, industrial, commercial and shore power applications. The company's products have been installed in more than 75 countries.

"It was, and still is, important to broaden our global footprint," CEO Craig Walker says. "Exporting our products not only increases awareness and appreciation for our technology, it naturally increases our sales as well. Exporting gives us the ability to ride out fluctuations in the United States economy and add jobs at the same time; it's a win-win endeavor."

A frequency converter is a device that turns current coming from a source into current that's suitable for the equipment that needs power. So when an airplane using 400 hertz arrives in a country that uses 50 hertz, the FCX unit converts available utility

power to the frequency required by the aircraft.

"The FCX unit also converts utility power to 270 volts for airplanes on aircraft carriers," Walker says. "Our units convert 60 hertz to 50 hertz to power cruise ships in dry dock, and we've even designed products that convert diesel power to 400 hertz for radar systems in the field."

The company developed the only solid-state frequency converter approved for use with the United States military's long-range, high altitude Patriot Missile. FCX has developed converters for the Egyptian Navy and the Israeli Air Force and designed, manufactured and installed 75 pre-conditioned air units to help travelers keep their cool when boarding and disembarking in the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, India.

FCX's export achievements have won recognition at the state and national levels. The company received the Governor's Commendation for International Market Entry, which honors companies that have successfully exported to a new country in the previous year. FCX has also been presented with the Presidential E-Award for Export Excellence, the highest award the federal government bestows on a manufacturer.



*Marble King produces marbles of all sizes and colors for use as children's toys, industrial components and decorative elements.*

## BUSINESS KEEPS ROLLING

Beri Fox has appeared on national television shows *The Colbert Report* and *The Martha Stewart Show* promoting her company, Marble King. A tireless advocate of American-made products and supporter of manufacturing, Fox is the president and CEO of the Marble King factory in Paden City, West Virginia, which produces one million marbles a day.

"We make about 3,000 different types, sizes, shapes, coatings and finishes," Fox says. "Our marbles are used in games, recreational toys, landscaping, jewelry, decoration and architectural and industrial applications."

Most domestic glass and marble markers are gone, casualties of changing times, energy costs and cheap foreign imports. However, American-made Marble King is still in business. The company aggressively pursues a winning strategy that combines fresh applications and expanding markets.

The company's first steps into world trade began as an exhibitor at international toy and gift fairs. The West Virginia Development Office and the United States Export Assistance Center provided practical advice on international shipping, tracking and paperwork.

"When we had questions," Fox says, "the Development Office and the Export Assistance

Center helped us find answers." Now Marble King exports to 17 countries, including Canada, China, France, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

As important as selling in new markets is finding more uses. To demonstrate, Fox picks up a can of spray paint and shakes it. "Hear that rattle? They're used as agitators in spray paint cans," she says. "Most people think that's a steel ball bearing in there, but it's not. Steel corrodes. Glass doesn't."

One of the company's latest projects appears in the new retail store *Altar'd State* in the Charleston Town Center mall. The chain of fashion boutiques recently created a signature panel using Marble King marbles held between two panels. Backlighting illuminates the translucent colors of the glass marbles.

"The architects approached us about designing a wall using marbles," Fox says. "We talked about whether to glue the marbles – we didn't; they're loose – and how to backlight the panel." The panel is now installed in more than 30 *Altar'd State* shops across the region.

"Before the chain-store project, we had worked with architects to create unique concepts that look cool," Fox says. "These projects allow us to be creative and think outside the box about what else we might be able to do."

“I recently attended a seminar about the export services the state offers. It was great to find out you don’t have to do it all yourself.”

**Doug Kreinik**, president  
KREINIK MANUFACTURING  
COMPANY

## INTERNATIONAL THREADS

Kreinik Manufacturing Company is the leading manufacturer of threads used in arts, crafts and fishing flies: metallic, silk, iron-on, machine sewing threads and more. The Parkersburg-based company also sells accessories such as needles and scissors and creates custom corders that twist two or more strands together.

“Most crafters pursue more than one craft,” President Doug Kreinik says. “One person may knit, cross stitch, spin, quilt and crochet.”

The company was founded in the early 1970s by Kreinik’s parents, Jerry and Estelle Kreinik. Their threads and accessories are sold to manufacturers and distributors around the world. The United States is the biggest market, followed by Australia, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Japan, Thailand, the Netherlands and Russia.

Kreinik often attends domestic and international

trade shows as an exhibitor and lecturer. He presents classes on crafts such as stitching, quilting and knitting. Each show includes samples of the company’s products and models of finished items.

Up until now, the company has carried out its export efforts on its own. That may change.

“I recently attended a seminar by the West Virginia Development Office International Division about market opportunities in Poland and the export services the state offers,” Kreinik says. “It was great to find out you don’t have to do it all yourself.”

*Neatly spooled as pictured at right, or carefully twisted and wound as shown at the top of the page, thread from Kreinik Manufacturing Company is used by fly fishermen, quilters and other craftspeople throughout the world.*





## BUILDING SOLUTIONS

An encounter at an industry expo in the 1990s launched Multicoat Products into exporting.

“At a trade show, we met a Japanese businessman who specializes in residential and commercial construction goods,” says John Dill, the company’s vice president and general manager. “We developed a working relationship that ultimately led to him importing our goods into Japan for his distribution. We realized the construction issues American contractors face are the same for contractors in foreign countries.”

Multicoat makes coatings for construction, renovation and industrial use. Among the company’s top selling products is Scratch Kote, used to help bond new pool plaster to the old plaster.

“Swimming pool plaster will last anywhere from 5 to 12 years before it needs to be re-coated,” says Dill. “Before Scratch Kote, workers had to chip off all of the old plaster with axes, haul away the debris and then clean. Scratch Kote eliminated the need to chip out the pool. That changed the pool plastering market.”

The coatings, produced in plants in Winfield, West Virginia and in California, are used for swimming pools, decorative concrete, exterior stucco and basements. The company’s industrial coatings include waterproofing for tank containment walls and floor coatings for industrial food-grade facilities.

Now Multicoat supplies its extensive line of coatings to growing markets abroad.

“We export to Japan, China, Dubai, Greece, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and most of the Caribbean islands,” says Dill. “We are also exporting a lot of material to our United States Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, for facility upgrades that are now in progress.” **E**

# TRADE WINDS

## carries INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS to West Virginia

The trade winds of history blew merchant ships across oceans, sailing toward new worlds of commerce. Today, the term Trade Winds still means business.

Trade Winds is a program organized by the U.S. Commercial Service (the trade promotion arm of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration) that supports the global business efforts of U.S. exporters from all 50 states. Each year, the program is hosted by a different country and focuses on a specific region of the world. Participating companies have access to business-to-business matchmaking appointments with qualified potential partners, meetings with senior commercial officers from posts throughout the region, and a conference focused on business opportunities and challenges within the country and surrounding markets.

The West Virginia Development Office and the Appalachian Regional Commission support businesses in the state that take part in Trade Winds. Development Office staff have accompanied West Virginia business leaders on Trade Winds missions to Poland, South Korea, Singapore, Colombia and South



*Among the equipment exported by Appalachian Electronic Instruments, the Tuftight eliminates defects and improves efficiency for textile manufacturing clients throughout the world.*

**“After the decline of the textile industry in the 2000s, our exporting kept us going. Now with the return of the U.S. textile markets and the increasing export opportunities, working with government agencies is even more important.”**

**Gary Michael McComas**, product manager  
APPALACHIAN ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS

Africa. To see a schedule of previous and upcoming trips, visit [www.export.gov/trademissions](http://www.export.gov/trademissions).

Leslie Drake, director of U.S. Commercial Service, Charleston office, notes the potential in foreign markets and explains the role her organization plays: “We provide everything from general market intelligence and information on the competitive landscape to vetting of potential customers and local distributors. This helps businesses enter foreign markets with confidence and information to develop their international business opportunities.”

In 2014, Appalachian Electronic Instruments joined the Trade Winds mission to Colombia. The company had several years of hands-on export experience when it came to shipping product, but not in international trade-building travel.

Although the company serves multiple markets today, it was founded in 1954 to make products for the domestic textile industry. After pioneering the development of end-break and defect detection for warp knitting machinery in the 1960s,

international customers began contacting the company with orders for its instrumentation.

“We were pulled into the exporting business by customer demand,” Product Manager Gary Michael McComas says. “AEI began exporting in the 1970s, before many of the state’s export programs were available.”

When West Virginia introduced its international market programs, the company sought assistance in navigating the business of exporting. “During the trade mission to Colombia, we met and signed a local sales agent,” McComas says.

After the initial Trade Winds trip, McComas returned to Colombia in September 2014 for training and customer visits, and the company’s president, Larry Nickell, visited in February 2015.

“The potential in Colombia is very good and working with Trade Winds made the task of finding and signing the agent much easier and more cost-effective,” McComas says. “After the decline of the U.S. textile industry in

the 2000s, our exporting kept us going. Now with the return of U.S. textile markets and the increasing export opportunities, working with government agencies is even more important.”

Today the company builds instrumentation for controlling various parts of the fabric formation process for weaving, knitting and tufting carpet. The company’s flagship product, the YTC-2000, is used around the world for controlling a key process in making denim. In addition to the textiles market, the company also serves the life sciences and hydrocarbon processing industries.

“Exporting has always been a key part of AEI’s business, and our increases in business have always been tied to increasing exports,” McComas says.

So far, the company has exported its products to more than 37 countries, from Argentina to Vietnam. The company has been recognized for its success multiple times with the Governor’s Commendation for International Market Entry awards.

# Uncontainable

120-YEAR-OLD CONTAINER MAKER  
KEEPS **EXPANDING**  
ITS **HORIZONS**

by Catherine Zacchi

**W**hat keeps a 120-year-old business going strong? For Eagle Manufacturing Company, the answer is a robust ability to adapt and a steady devotion to quality.

“Our ability to change is the number one reason we’ve been successful through 120 years and four generations of a family business,” says Joe Eddy, president and CEO. “It’s not just our willingness to change; it’s our eagerness, and that change continues today.”

Eddy himself is something of an innovation for Eagle. In 2009, the West Virginia native became the company’s first non-family chief executive and board member. The manufacturing company was founded in Wellsburg in 1894 by brothers James, Harry and Samuel Paull and their brother-in-law, William Jacob. More than a century later, the company is still owned by third- and fourth-generation descendants of the Paull family, with many fourth- and fifth-generation employees.

The manufacturer’s talent for change is evident in the evolution of its products. In 1894, Eagle produced glass goods such as kerosene lamps, globes for gas street lights and even apothecary jars for pharmacists. As the industry transitioned from coal to gasoline, the business switched from





*Eagle Manufacturing started producing opal glass globes and kerosene lamps in Wellsburg, West Virginia in 1894. Innovation and a focus on customer needs paved the way for expanding product lines to include metal safety cabinets, safety guards and spill containment products such as the safety can pictured above.*

# EAGLE MANUFACT



**1894**

**JAN. 1**

Eagle Glass and Manufacturing Company founded, Wellsburg.

**1890s**

**OCT. 1897**

Eagle employs 35 and produces the largest and most versatile line of opal glass novelties on the market.

Establishes a separate division called Central Supply Company, which packages baking powder, various spices and 4,000 gallons of Golden Eagle Mustard per day.

**1900s**

Eagle adds a metal department, which produces metal caps for glass jars, watering cans and desk accessories.

**1902**

The company manufactures a wide range of products that include plain and decorated lamps, gas and electric globes, pharmacists' goods and opal dome shades.

glass to metal products, producing metal oiler cans and fuel supply cans. The metal fuel supply cans led to the current line of OSHA-required safety cans and storage cabinets. In 1985, Eagle began manufacturing fuel containers and spill containment products from plastics as well as metals. A business that once made containers for consumers transitioned to containers mostly for industrial sites.

Today Eagle is one of the world's largest manufacturers of metal and plastic industrial safety cans, safety cabinets, spill containment products, plastic drums, material handling products and guard and protective products – everything from cigarette receptacles for designated smoking areas to biohazard waste cans. The company designs its own line of more than 1,000 different products. Nearly all of its manufacturing takes place in three plants in Wellsburg. The company occupies approximately 750,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space.

*19-year-Eagle employee Aaron McAllister assembles a Type I safety can. The cans are used for safe handling and storage of gasoline and other flammable liquids.*



# MANUFACTURING COMPANY

## 1900s

### 1907

Eagle starts making welded steel supply cans for railroad, factory and quarry use.

### 1918

The company drops “glass” from its name and becomes Eagle Manufacturing Company.

## 1920s

### 1921

The metal plant becomes the largest producer of oil cans in the United States during the 1920s.

### 1923

The Hazel-Atlas Glass Company buys all of Eagle’s machinery and molds for making drug-trade jars and the novelty glass line.

## 1930s

The company survives the Great Depression and the 1936 flood which crests at 56.6 feet and inundates the buildings.

## DOING BUSINESS BETTER, FASTER

Eagle designs, manufactures and markets its own proprietary products. Even after 120 years, every aspect of the company comes under scrutiny for ways to do more, better and faster. It’s constantly pushing to innovate and bring new products to market.

“We have instituted a goal of 15 percent of annual sales each year from products developed within the last five years,” Eddy says.

Eagle has begun using 3-D printing to design new products and improve on existing products. With 3-D technology, a printer follows a computer’s digital instructions or blueprint to “print” an object using materials such as plastics or metal. The process prints one layer at a time until the object is complete.

The company uses 3-D printing to reduce its product development time, from concept to initial production, from an average of 24 months to less than 12 months in many cases. The accelerated product development has enabled the company to offer more than 150 new products in the past five years and build a foundation for future growth.



*Eagle employee Joey Lallone assembles a safety cabinet at the company's Wellsburg facility.*

“The 3-D technology allows us to develop innovative designs and move new products to the market faster,” says design engineer Pat Petraglia. “The 3-D printer lets us design for manufacturing, reduce development costs and introduce new designs within days instead of months.”

Eagle adopts modern production technologies – such as automation, robotics and microprocessor chips – and finds productive ways to integrate them with century-old processes, such as stamping equipment and deep-draw technologies.



# MANUFACT

## 1940s

Eagle oilers are found around the world as part of the equipment on U.S. military Jeeps, tanks, trucks and naval vessels. Push bottom and pump oilers are the leading products sold.

### 1945

After World War II, the company faces changing demands, requiring extensive expenditures for improvements in buildings, machinery and equipment.

## 1950s

Eagle's galvanized containers become industry leaders for use with motor boats, lawn mowers and other gasoline-powered machines.

### 1955

Eagle begins to silk-screen its identification on gas cans and oilers, replacing paper labels.

## 1960s

The roster of manufacturers' representatives selling Eagle products grows to 13 sales agencies, with 11 in the U.S. and two in Canada.

### 1967

Eagle introduces safety storage cabinets, a major addition to the product line.

“The founders instilled a leadership process, principles and tradition in an extraordinary workforce.”

**Joe Eddy**, president and CEO  
EAGLE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

“It’s very efficient,” Eddy says. “We constantly evaluate our production processes for efficiency gains, cost containment and quality improvements and have integrated robotics and automation on all lines.”

In 2010, Eddy asked his engineers to take a fresh look at the 45-year-old safety cabinet line. He challenged them to find a way to improve quality while cutting 30 percent of the cost. A year later, the engineers came up with a solution: incorporate more automation and move outsourced components inhouse.

In another production enhancement, Eagle recently made additions to increase plastics production by 25 percent with a new dual 40-pound extrusion blow-molding system and a new 500-ton structural foam injection molding system.

The company’s products are sold at more than 10,000 domestic distributors and in most



# FIGURING COMPANY

## 1970s

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Act is passed. Safety products become the company's second most important line.

### 1973

The lead time on steel suddenly goes from weeks to months, hampering the company's ability to produce products in a timely fashion.

## 1980s

### 1981

Eagle replaces the double opening gas can line with single opening cans, which quickly become top sellers. The company improves its safety can design.

### 1987

The company takes delivery of its first plastics blow-molding systems.

## 1990s

### 1992

Production begins shifting from metals to plastics. Eagle begins developing spill pallets and other products for the hazardous materials market.

### 1994

Eagle celebrates its 100th anniversary.

### 1997

Eagle opens a new cabinet manufacturing plant.

industrial markets worldwide. Distributors expect quick turnaround between order and shipment. Figuring out how to deliver on that expectation falls to the manufacturer.

"We set a goal to ship orders within one to three days," Eddy says. "That requires keeping a vast and varied inventory of more than 1,000 different products."

The line of safety cabinets alone includes 23 sizes in seven colors and three door styles.

"Stocking means we can ship faster than trying to manufacture to fill each order," he says. "This gives the customer a seamless business environment that makes it easy to do business with Eagle and hard to leave."

To keep up with production and inventory demands, Eagle needed to expand. In November 2014, the company announced an addition of 50,000 square feet to its distribution center, more than doubling the space to 90,000 square feet. Also, a new 48,000-square-foot metal fabrication department will produce a new line of metal bollards, machine guards and metal spill containment pallets.

"What makes Eagle so adaptable are the principles built into the company from the beginning," Eddy says.

"The founders instilled a leadership process, principles and tradition in an extraordinary workforce," he says. "We are focused on integrity, innovation, work ethic and service."

Our quality policy can be summed up as this: "excel in manufacturing and marketing and to be the supplier of choice to our customers."

*Jason Baire works with the blow-molding machine to produce a 95-gallon salvage drum. Customers use salvage drums to contain damaged or leaking containers on-site or for collection of absorbent substances following cleanup of a spill.*





## 2000s

### 2004

Eagle introduces ramps, dock plates and route truck safety ramps for bakeries.

### 2006

Eagle discontinues the last of its century-old lubricating oil cans.

### 2010

Eagle redesigns its safety cabinet line, introducing robotic bending and welding operations into the process.

### 2012

Eagle purchases the former Banner Fiberboard property and starts construction of a new 40,000-square-foot high bay warehouse.

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Many of the company's metal and plastic manufacturing processes are highly technical, requiring a skilled and flexible workforce. The company's employees, members of the United Steelworkers, are up to the challenge.

"Our labor force has adapted well to the robotics, electronics, PLC controllers and other automation and productivity improvements. Most team members are trained to do any job in their department, as they bid on different jobs every day," Eddy says. "I believe we have the best craftsmen in the industry."

In 2014, Eagle honored 25 of its 185 employees for more than 40 years of service. Some of that employee loyalty and can-do spirit may arise from the fact that at Eagle, co-workers not only feel like family, but in many cases actually are.

"Most of our team members have a family history at Eagle," Eddy says. "We have many that are fourth- and fifth-generation, and several families with multiple team members working here." Examples include brothers Jonathan, Joe and Jared Lallone, who work in the galvanized and silkscreen departments; mother and son Beth and A.J. Klein, both in plastics; and brothers Billy

and Matt Matteson, both in management positions. The Matteson brothers both earned degrees from Bethany College; Billy in education and Matt in accounting. Today, Matt is corporate controller and Billy is production manager.

"Working with my older brother has been a great experience," Matt says. "To have someone in the workplace that you know you can count on and who can give you a different perspective on things is a great benefit. I think the biggest advantage is the comfort level you have with a family member to talk, listen and learn from each other's experiences."

"It is well known that Eagle employees, both past and present, feel a sense of pride," says Corporate

*Eagle employee Brian Henderson runs a steel coil on the blanker machine. Eagle Manufacturing recently expanded its metal fabrication production facilities.*



# URING COMPANY

## 2000s

### 2013

Eagle purchases the 50,000 square foot former Pillsbury bag plant and starts renovations. Also starts a major marketing rebranding campaign and purchases a high resolution 3-D printer for product innovation and development.

### 2014

Eagle adds three additional large capacity plastic units for production of its new drums, wheeled industrial waste containers, rack guards and its new modular cabinet line. Eagle also introduces new line of steel spill containment pallets and an extensive line of flexible spill containment products.

### 2015

Eagle starts construction on a 50,000 square foot expansion to its Banner Warehouse and Distribution Center, as well as opens a new Fabrication Division in its new Pillsbury plant, including plasma cutting, robotic welding, hydraulic pipe bending, plastics hot plate welding and is also opening a new engineering technologies lab.

*Eagle began silk-screening its identification on products in 1955, just one of the early innovations the company is known for today. Pat Smith checks the imprint on a 5-gallon Type I safety can.*

Secretary and Marketing Manager Ingrid Loy, who has worked for the company for nine years. “There’s the pride of working for a 121-year-old company that was successful before we were born and continues to be a growing success today.”

As for Eddy, he grew up in Tyler County, where he helped his grandfather tend the oil wells on his farm. He was intrigued by finding fossilized seashells in the drill cuttings from thousands of feet below the surface. Eddy earned a degree in petroleum engineering and embarked on a career in engineering and management.

“I have lived all over this great country—Texas, California, Wyoming, Louisiana and Ohio,” Eddy says, “but my greatest pleasure was moving back to West Virginia.”

Eddy credits the state as an important contributor to Eagle’s long-term success. West Virginia offers Eagle competitive advantages such as proximity to markets, low utility costs, local raw materials, access to public officials, and a skilled workforce.

“West Virginia has made progress in its efforts to promote business development, which has



helped all businesses in the state,” he says. “We have operated here successfully for over 120 years and are very optimistic about our company’s and our state’s future.

“No matter how great a company, product or process was when originally conceived or created, it must evolve and adapt to its changing environment in order to continue to succeed.” **E**

## A Tale of Two Cities

by Hoy Murphy

For many small businesses, size does matter, and in the cases of Ronceverte and Martinsburg — two cities in different areas of West Virginia — it's that size that makes the difference in their success.

Both are West Virginia Main Street communities, exploring methods for increasing their capacity for downtown commercial district revitalization. What's old has become new again, as outdated buildings have been renovated to meet the needs of modern commerce, and community leaders strive to improve the quality of life for those who work and live in the downtown area.

Ronceverte calls itself the Friendly River City. Martinsburg claims the title of West Virginia's fastest-growing city. Both have many reasons to take pride in their accomplishments and look forward to future success.



# MARTINSBURG

## West Virginia's fastest growing city

Established in 1778, Martinsburg is the seat of Berkeley County. During its long history, Martinsburg had been a manufacturing hub, a blue-collar area with wool mills and an apple-orchard economy. In recent years, a new kind of economy has emerged around Martinsburg as Macy's established a national fulfillment center and Procter & Gamble announced a \$500 million manufacturing facility in nearby Tabler Station to open in 2017 (see **The Tide Keeps Rising**, page 10).

Martinsburg was founded during the American Revolutionary War by General Adam Stephen. He named it in honor of Colonel Thomas Bryan Martin, a nephew of Thomas Fairfax, sixth Lord Fairfax of Cameron. The town was built around the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and was a strategic point during the Civil War, changing control between the Union and the Confederacy 50 times. The first United States post office in what is now West Virginia was established in Martinsburg in 1792. Historic and tourism sites in the city include The Apollo Theatre, The Arts Centre, Belle Boyd House, Adam Stephen House and the Apple Harvest Festival.

### SMALL TOWN CHARM, BIG CITY CONVENIENCE

Martinsburg is the largest city in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle and the fastest-growing city in the state, according to the latest United States census data. Part of that growth can be attributed to its proximity to the Washington, D.C.-metro area, but just as important is its reputation for small-town friendliness, history and appeal to new industry, including small businesses.

"We're a bedroom community, and a lot of people commute to the metropolitan areas," says Randy Lewis, "but they want that suburban-type life and country living available here." Lewis is executive director of the Main Street Martinsburg program, which assists the community in revitalizing the downtown commercial district. "Downtown is special. We schedule a lot of activities and seasonal events. The city has established green space with a town square. We're building walking and biking trails and promoting a healthy lifestyle."

*Among Martinsburg's historical buildings are the Belle Boyd House, home of one of the most notorious Confederacy spies of the American Civil War; and the Adam Stephen House, home of the city's founder, an American Revolutionary War general.*



### Main Street West Virginia

is a program of the West Virginia Development Office that focuses on economic development of historic downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. Martinsburg is one of the oldest Main Street West Virginia cities, receiving its official designation in 1992. Ronceverte was designated a Main Street community in September 2005.



Officials continue efforts to increase the number of small businesses, and four grand openings have been held within the past year. Concert Technologies, a company that specializes in technology infrastructure for government and commercial organizations, moved to Martinsburg in late 2014 to set up its customer call center, employing about 50 people.

An example of the company's technology is what CEO and President Dennis Mazaris calls his "doubler," a two-wheeled robot with an iPad at the top that he uses to move around the offices and provide visual and audio communication with his staff around the building when he's away. He says Martinsburg is a good fit for his company's needs.

"There are a lot of places for my employees to eat and shop. It's centralized for a commute with major highways and a train going into D.C. There are several technical schools which provide a good pool of employees, offering opportunities for future growth."

### THE SWEET SPOT

DeFluri's Fine Chocolates has been part of downtown Martinsburg for 16 years. A specialty chocolate manufacturer, DeFluri's started closer to Washington, D.C., but moved to get away from the congestion of the metropolitan area, according to owner Brenda Casabona. DeFluri's has a small retail area in the front and a large manufacturing area in the back of its building, an old McCrory's Five and Dime the company remodeled.

"It's a great location because we're right on Interstate 81 so it's not a problem getting product out or getting supplies in. It's a large enough area that you've got a pool of employees and also customers for the retail aspect."



# TINSBURG

Anyone who has made a stop along Interstate 81 near Martinsburg has likely come across some of the colorful rack cards promoting Martinsburg's West Virginia Glass and Queen Street Gallery, both owned and operated by Greg Henry. Queen Street Gallery started in Martinsburg 19 years ago as a dealer in antique crafts, maps, posters, art, jewelry and glass. Nine years ago, the glass aspect was split off into the West Virginia Glass store a half block away.

"We strictly target tourists," said Henry, noting the ubiquitous rack cards he puts into area businesses, hotels, rest stops and anywhere they will fit. "Every hotel within



*Antique crafts, arts, jewelry, and glass from just about anywhere can be found at Martinsburg's Queen Street Gallery.*



three miles of each exit from Pennsylvania into Tennessee has our rack cards."

Henry recommends Martinsburg to others considering a place to set up shop.

"I recently talked to a guy from North Carolina who wanted to open up a barber shop, and now he's opening up across the street from us."

That's a message Lewis is working to get out. "Once people come here they can see things are happening. They want to be a part of that positive image that helps revitalize a downtown." **E**

*DeFluri's Fine Chocolates is famous for making and selling its sweet confections in downtown Martinsburg.*

# RONCE

## The Friendly River City

It's called "The Friendly River City." The river is the Greenbrier, and the city is Ronceverte. The "friendly" comes from the people who live, work and do business in this small but thriving Greenbrier County city.

The town was established April 1, 1882, and was almost named Edgarton because of the high number of people with the last name Edgar who lived there. As of the 2010 census, there were 1,765 people, 753 households and 446 families residing in the city. Ronceverte is French for "Bramble Green," which is the Gallic equivalent for "Greenbrier," a common vine

found in the area when it was being settled in the late 18th century.

Like many small towns with a long history, Ronceverte has experienced booms and busts as the country and the economy have changed over the years. It once was a proud railroad town with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway connecting it to other areas for trade and transportation. In later years, the building of the interstate highway system drew traffic and business away, leaving more than a few empty businesses and abandoned structures. Recently, however, things have changed, and a full-scale revival is underway.

*Views of the Greenbrier River are available from many spots in Ronceverte.*



# VERTE

## BOUTIQUE BUSINESSES WELCOME VISITORS

“Partnering with the United States Department of Agriculture, Main Street Ronceverte has purchased older buildings in downtown and rehabilitated them,” explains Christina Crookshanks, executive director for Main Street Ronceverte, “and then offered the space to new businesses at an affordable price in a good location. That’s a tremendous help to businesses starting out. In addition to rentals, we’re selling some of the renovated buildings to businesses and then using the money to buy another building and renovate that, and then continue doing the same thing.”

Kathy King and her sister, Belinda Bostic, took advantage of this opportunity. Three years ago they leased space from one of the buildings to start the Edgarton Café and Bakery in downtown Ronceverte.

“We decided to try the bakery because there weren’t any café style restaurants in town that offered fresh cooked foods and fresh bakery items. Business is steady. Belinda runs the bakery Monday through Friday and does all the main-course food. I go in the evenings and do the bakery side.”

*Small details, such as a mosaic tile entry to a shop and the lamps along the main thoroughfare, help Ronceverte businesses blend the old with the new.*



## RONCEVERTE



*Chocolate chip cookies are among the favorite items made on-site and enjoyed by customers at the Edgarton Café and Bakery.*

King also bought and renovated a nearby Victorian home and turned it into a popular bed and breakfast called the Edgarton Inn. She says it is a lot of fun because of the many tourists who go out of their way to stay there.

Main Street Ronceverte also was helpful to Sally Baker in creating WV ReUsers, LLC, a company she formed. They saw the need for rental property as the nearby West Virginia Osteopathic School of Medicine was expanding. Using federal and state tax credits, they started buying and rehabilitating old buildings, some older than 100 years, back to their original design and offering them to people looking for rentals.

“Right now we’re involved in rehabbing the old Odd Fellows Lodge in town,” Baker says. “When we’re finished we’ll have four apartments in it. The community has been really helpful about telling us the building’s history and showing us old photographs, so that’s kind of nice.”

“Kind of nice,” is another way of saying “friendly,” and that friendliness is widely felt in Ronceverte.

That can-do attitude has resulted in recent improvements that draw foot traffic to downtown. For example Island Park, hugging the banks of the Greenbrier River, features a new skateboard park and a community garden. Downtown has been spruced up with new sidewalks, lamp posts and banners. CSX Transportation is fixing up its old downtown depot with hopes of opening for public tours during Labor Day weekend.

And even bigger improvements are on the way.

“We are a walkable community. We are a green community,” Crookshanks explains. “We’re working on projects to make it more walkable and more green. We’ll soon have a ‘sparks’ recharge station for electric vehicles, the first in the county. We have a project coming up that will allow you to get free Wi-Fi if you go into any of the downtown businesses.”

Ronceverte is truly the friendly river city, and, thanks to the efforts of the people who live there, it’s about to get a lot friendlier for new and existing businesses, residents and visitors. ■ E

# VERTE



*Kathy King enjoys entertaining guests at her Edgarton Inn, a bed and breakfast which was renovated from a Victorian home in downtown Ronceverte.*



## Governor Tomblin announces the elimination of the Business Franchise Tax

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin announced the elimination of the Business Franchise Tax, effective Jan. 1, 2015. The removal is the latest step in a series of reductions that has improved West Virginia's business climate and led to new investments across the state.

"The Business Franchise Tax, created in 1987, was one of the taxes that made it difficult for West Virginia to compete for new and expanding businesses," Governor Tomblin said.

"Coupled with the reduction in the Corporate Net Income Tax and the dramatic decrease in workers' compensation rates, these changes have helped our state secure additional investments and will continue to pay dividends now and for years to come."



## Small Business recognized in Governor Tomblin's 2015 State of the State Address

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin recognized Isabella Yosuico, founder of MightyTykes physical development weights for infants and children during his 2015 State of the State Address in the House Chamber at the State Capitol. The speech highlighted West Virginia's economic progress and introduced some of the businesses that exemplify those achievements. Included among the state's highlights were the improved business climate, meaningful reforms to

the education system, and the reduction or elimination of taxes for working families and small businesses. The efforts help create a business climate where companies are encouraged to innovate, expand and create new jobs. The governor cited the example of entrepreneurs like Yosuico, who saw a need in her own family, came up with an innovative solution and worked with West Virginia agencies and resources to launch it in the commercial market.

## Wal-Mart recognizes woman-owned small business in Wheeling



The frozen treat manufacturer Ziegenfelder Company is one of six women-owned companies selected by Wal-Mart for recognition. CEO Lisa Allen is the third generation of her family to head the Wheeling-based company. Ziegenfelder produces Budget Saver Twin Pops.

The giant retailer is promoting companies with "Woman-Owned" signage in Wal-Mart stores and online. To be eligible, the companies had to be certified by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council or WEConnect International. Wal-Mart research shows that shoppers are more likely to buy a product if they know it comes from a woman-owned business.

# New Law BOOSTS Craft Breweries

More craft brewers have plans on tap to grow in West Virginia, thanks to a new law that lowers licensing and bonding costs and eliminates restrictions on the sale and distribution of beer.

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin signed the bill in May. "I was proud to introduce a bill that helps develop one of our state's fastest-growing niche markets," he said. "It benefits brewers, consumers and distributors alike."

There are currently 11 craft breweries around the state, a number that has grown significantly in the last decade. About 6,000 barrels of beer were produced last year.

A key change in the law will allow the sale of growlers, which are 32- to 64-ounce containers of beer, at restaurants, grocery and convenience stores.



Since many craft brewers don't have the resources to have their beer bottled or canned, growlers are the primary means of distribution. The new law is expected to generate additional tourism dollars. Annual craft beer festivals around the state, such as the Rails and Ales craft beer festival in Huntington, Mountaineer Brewfest in Wheeling, and Brewskies in Canaan, attract thousands of visitors from neighboring states.

# Three credit rating agencies reaffirm positive ratings for West Virginia bonds

West Virginia bonds have recently received positive ratings from Fitch Ratings, Standard & Poor's Rating Service and Moody's Investor Service.

"We are credited for being one of the most fiscally responsible states in the nation," said Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. "Our bond ratings were recently reaffirmed—a move that saves taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars when building schools, roads and making long-term investments to improve our infrastructure."

Fitch assigned an AA+ rating to West Virginia's general obligation infrastructure refunding bonds. In addition, Fitch affirms the

ratings of AA+ for \$460.4 million outstanding general obligation bonds and AA for \$400.2 million outstanding appropriation-backed debt of the Economic Development and School Building authorities. Fitch cited factors such as manageable debt, sizable reserves and "well-managed financial operations" that take into account a balance of expenditure solutions and limited use of Rainy Day Funds.

Standard & Poor's reaffirmed its ratings on three categories of bonds: AA rating on the state's general obligation debt; AA- rating on bonds related to legislative appropriation; and A on outstanding debt issues by

the state Water Development Authority. The credit rating service also gave an AA rating to two new sets of infrastructure bonds being issued by West Virginia in 2015.

Moody's assigned an Aa1 rating to \$71.4 million Infrastructure General Obligation Refunding Bonds 2015 Series A and B. The investors service company reported that the rating reflects "the state's ongoing trend of fiscal conservatism and disciplined financial management evidenced by consistently strong reserve fund balances for almost a decade."

## Mountain Craft hardwood company to build \$1 million facility in Preston County

Mountain Craft Wide Plank broke ground for its new headquarters and manufacturing facility in Northpointe Business and Industry Park, Hazelton. The site will include a drying facility, a sawmill and a showroom. Mountain Craft expects to hire 10 workers when construction on the \$1 million structure is completed. The company will produce wide plank Appalachian hardwood flooring from hickory, cherry, maple, red oak and white oak. The product will be used by builders, architects and homeowners for new or remodeling construction projects.



*Shown at groundbreaking (left to right): C.J. Callahan, United Bank; Matt Borrer, West Virginia Development Office; Robbie Baylor, Preston County Economic Development Authority; Matt Thorn, Mountain Craft Wide Plank; Geary Weir, West Virginia Hardwood Alliance Zone; and Shawn Grushecky, Appalachian Hardwood Center at West Virginia University.*

## Hino Motors ANNOUNCES \$8 million EXPANSION in Wood County

Hino Motors Manufacturing U.S.A. Inc. plans to invest up to \$8 million in its truck assembly plant in Williamstown. The company will add 30,000 square feet to the existing structure as well as a dedicated training facility and a stand-alone quality control testing center. The expansion is expected to eventually add up to 50 new employees to the company's current workforce of 225. Construction is scheduled for completion in fall 2015.

Hino received approval to lease adjoining property owned by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. The authority approved the lease during its March meeting. The property consists of 11.8 acres. The lease runs through March 31, 2018, and includes an option for the company to buy the land in the future. Hino will make property improvements such as adding parking spaces, moving light poles and building a berm between the facility and the adjacent neighborhood.



## headquarters moves to West Virginia



*Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and Commerce Secretary Keith Burdette join Hironori Kurita, president of Diamond Electric Manufacturing Corporation, Ltd. in announcing the North American headquarters' move to West Virginia.*

Diamond Electric announced the relocation of its North American headquarters from Michigan to West Virginia. The move consolidated the automotive ignition coil manufacturer's main U.S. office with its existing operation in Eleanor, Putnam County. The plant in Eleanor has grown into the company's largest production facility in the world.

The parent company, Diamond Electric Manufacturing Co., Ltd., is headquartered in Osaka, Japan. Diamond Electric supplies ignition coils to Ford Motor, Chrysler, Toyota and Subaru.

Diamond Electric employed approximately 335 workers in West Virginia before the announcement. The employees in Michigan were given an opportunity to relocate with the company to West Virginia.



## Governor Tomblin hosts state's first **WORKFORCE SUMMIT**

West Virginia's first-ever Workforce Summit brought together leaders from both the public and private sectors earlier this year to discuss progress the state has made in meeting the needs of West Virginia's workforce. Governor Earl Ray Tomblin hosted the summit with the West Virginia Workforce Planning Council at BridgeValley Community and Technical College's Advanced Technology Center in South Charleston. The Summit focused on providing a comprehensive review of the state's past, present and future workforce development efforts as well as the training needs of new and expanding businesses investing in the state.

Governor Tomblin has made workforce development a top priority during his time in office, and he now personally chairs the Workforce Planning Council. He has re-established and re-shaped the council to better align classroom learning with workplace needs. The former seven-member Council was expanded to include Cabinet secretaries and officials from a number of state agencies ranging from the West Virginia Department of Commerce and the West Virginia Department of Education to the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance, the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

## Williams Lea EXPANDS facility in Wheeling

100

The Williams Lea Group celebrated the addition of 11,250 square feet to its operations center in Wheeling. The expansion brings the Williams Lea total space in the Stone Center Building to nearly 50,000 square feet. The expansion was in response to anticipated increases in client activity. The projected growth is expected to lead to 100 new positions in the near future. Williams Lea is a global leader in providing specialist business processing outsourcing services. The Wheeling center currently provides document creation, word processing, creative services, administrative services, and finance and accounting support functions for law firms, investment banks and other clients.

## Sistersville Tank Works BREAKS GROUND for new plant in Pleasants County



*Groundbreaking for Sistersville Tank Works expansion, Pleasants County Industrial Center.*

Sistersville Tank Works hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for a new 40,000-square-foot plant in the Pleasants County Industrial Center. Construction is scheduled for completion by July 2015. The expansion facility is expected to create 30 new jobs initially. Sistersville Tank Works will continue operations at its original site in Tyler County, where it employs 50 workers.

Sistersville Tank Works got its start in 1894 producing oil field boilers, tanks and pressure vessels for the growing oil and gas industry. Today the company manufactures custom pressure vessels, tanks and heat exchangers for domestic and international customers in the chemical, oil, power generation and pharmaceutical industries.

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