

# FOCUS

## MANUFACTURING

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## AMSCO Windows: Made in the USA

**By Andrew Haley**  
*The Enterprise*

AMSCO Windows, a Salt Lake City-based manufacturer of vinyl windows and patio doors, experienced a surge in sales last year, though revenues remain lower than pre-recession levels.

Marketing coordinator Andy Schulz said sales were up last year about 20 percent over the previous year, and while the firm is “down from 2007 we anticipate another good year.”

Though he declined to state actual revenues, citing privacy policies of the privately held company, Schulz gave a ballpark estimate of the company’s financial picture.

“When we do our category listing we’re [in the category of companies making] over \$50 million per year,” he said.

Phillip Rasmussen, a Magna-born South High graduate who served in the U.S. Navy in World

War II, founded AMSCO in Salt Lake City in 1949. Originally a supplier of aluminum window awnings, AMSCO became a window manufacturer in the 1970s when it began making aluminum storm windows, and found its present calling a decade later when it pioneered the development of vinyl windows and patio doors. When Rasmussen died last year, he served as chairman of the board of one of the largest vinyl window and patio door manufacturing companies in the United States.

“To our knowledge we’re the largest vinyl window plant in North America. We sell in Australia, South Korea, Mexico, Canada, pretty much from Texas to the West Coast, all out of one location,” Schulz said.

AMSCO moved down the street to its present location in the 1970s and has continuously operated out of Salt Lake City. It has

received media attention in recent years as a rare building materials supplier continuing to offer products made in the United States. In 2011, AMSCO was featured on ABC’s “World News Tonight With Diane Sawyer” as one of several companies whose products were used in the building of a Montana home constructed entirely from materials made in the U.S.A.

In the segment, “Where You Can Buy Made in America Building Products,” homebuilder and economist Anders Lewendal states that if homebuilders increased their use of American-made products by only 5 percent, it would create 220,000 jobs. His “Made in America House” used more than 120 products, including AMSCO windows, from over 30 states. Despite costing more, mostly because American workers earn more than their Chinese counterparts, Lewendal told ABC that his house cost only “1 or 2 percent”

more than a foreign sourced home, presumably because of higher quality materials.

Though the “Made in USA” mantra has been good for AMSCO, Schulz said its operating strategy had more to do with logistical necessity than marketing or politics.

“We make everything here. It just kind of happens. Part of it is inherent to the window business. You can’t ship windows from across the ocean. It’s something that has been with us forever. We haven’t had to force a ‘Made in USA’ thing because we’ve always just kind of done that,” Schulz said.

“We’re still functioning on the same principles as we were founded under. It’s a family business. We have many families working here. It’s almost a tradition working here. My father is a 40-year employee here,” he said.

AMSCO’s product line includes vinyl and composite windows and patio doors, sound control windows, and several kinds of specialized CōzE performance glass that offers increased thermal retention and ultraviolet wavelength filtration to limit heat loss and sun damage. AMSCO’s online Architectural Design Manual interfaces with AutoCAD, providing a catalog of files in both DWG and DXF formats. Its windows and patio doors are covered by a limited lifetime warranty.

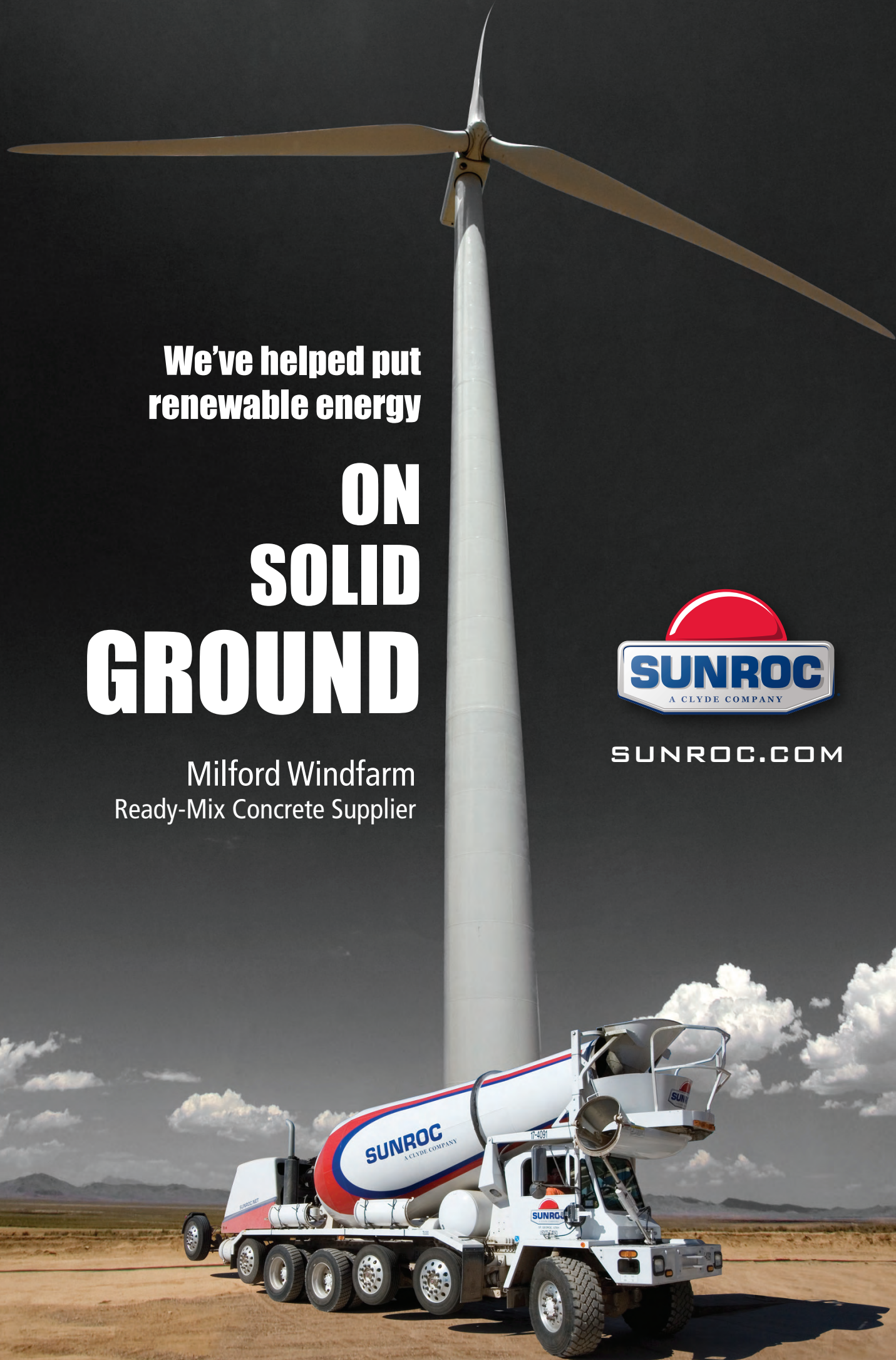
Schulz said AMSCO’s plant at 1880 S. 1045 W. employs about 250 people.

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## Profits at ALSCO continue to be driven by international markets

By Andrew Haley

*The Enterprise*

Profits at legacy linen supply company ALSCO, Salt Lake City, continue to be driven by the expansion of international markets such as Brazil.

Jim Divers, director of sales and marketing said the company, which provides laundry, rental and leasing services for linens and uniforms, is growing in all areas, though he declined to provide specific financial data, citing the strict privacy policy of the privately held company. ALSCO, known variously as Steiner American Corp., Steiner Corp. and American Linen Supply Co. over its 124-year history, launched an international rebranding effort in 2002 that brought all of its operations under the ALSCO name.

"We operate in 14 different countries. We actively look for acquisitions and expect growth to continue. We experience growth in all areas," Divers said.

According to *Forbes*, in 2006 ALSCO saw \$1.16 billion in revenues and employed 17,500 people at 145 service centers in 10 countries. Though Divers declined to answer specific questions regarding ALSCO's revenues or the number of people it employs, his statement that ALSCO operates in 14 countries indicates the company expanded substantially in the previous seven years. Though he declined to say whether current revenues were higher or lower than \$1.16 billion, Divers said that ALSCO is experiencing sustained growth and that the company is "experiencing the same growth as the local economies [in which it operate]."

"You could almost set your [measuring] tools to the local economy," he said.

But with international markets continuing to waver under the burdens of a global credit crunch and a middling economic recovery, coupling its growth to emerging markets may mean rough times ahead for the linen giant. In circumspect statements, Divers singled out Brazil as one market where ALSCO has been thriving. But according to a January report in *The Economist*, weak third quarter GDP numbers have led market and government analysts to cut back Brazil's 2012 GDP growth predictions to a mere 1 percent.

Slowing GDP growth is only one of Brazil's problems. Official 2012 inflation rates of 5.84 percent would likely have been closer to 6.5 percent had Brazil's federal government not artificially constrained the price of gasoline, *The Economist* reported in its article. Projected inflation rates of 6.5% or higher for the coming year are leading analysts to drop expected GDP growth for Brazil in 2013.

ALSCO has done business in Brazil since 1949, when the nearly re-incorporated company entered a period of significant international expansion. Then-president F.G. Steiner reportedly felt that the limited growth potential of U.S. markets in the years following World War II necessitated moving the company into overseas markets. ALSCO has continued to expand internationally and has diversified into a number of areas, including paper and paper products.

China, which has continued a diminished but still meteoric rise through the years of the Great Recession, could prove to

be an enormous growth engine for ALSCO in the coming years, but only after the company makes significant investments there. According to the *Financial Times*, the Chinese economy rebounded to 8 percent growth in the fourth quarter of 2012, ending seven consecutive quarters of diminishing growth. Even with growth rates down from averages of 10 percent per year since market reforms began in 1978, the Chinese economy remains one of the strongest emerging markets in the world, and a promising source of future growth for companies like ALSCO doing business there.

"We're just getting started in China," Divers said.

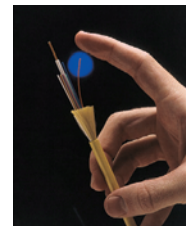
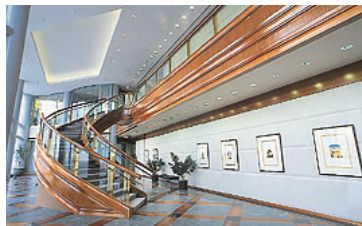
With European markets still struggling to contain disastrous economic problems in Greece and in Spain, where unemployment

rates among young people now stand at 55 percent, cornering the Chinese linen market may be ALSCO's best bet, if its growth continues to be dependent on international operations. Closer to home, ALSCO's business with the state of Utah has been shrinking since 2009. According to the Utah Transparency Project, state expenditures to the linen company declined from \$163,735 in 2009 to \$40,625 in 2012, a loss of over 75 percent.

ALSCO's links to Utah are historic. Founder George Steiner started the company in Lincoln, Neb., in 1889 when, at the age of 15, he bought a freshly laundered towel delivery route from Lincoln Steam Laundry for \$50.80. Along with his brother Frank, Steiner made pioneering inroads into

the linen and laundry business of today by offering to fetch, clean and deliver fresh aprons to grocers and other clerks in the fledgling frontier town. After weathering three years of economic depression in the early 1890s, Steiner relocated the company to Salt Lake City in 1895.

Steiner's company was incorporated in 1912 as the American Linen Supply Co. In 1918, F.G. Steiner, George Steiner's 21-year-old son, patented the continuous towel dispenser still common in restrooms throughout the world. Though it has existed under a variety of names and in a variety of forms, ALSCO remains headquartered in Salt Lake City and its co-presidents and co-CEOs, brothers Robert and Kevin Steiner, are George Steiner's grandsons.



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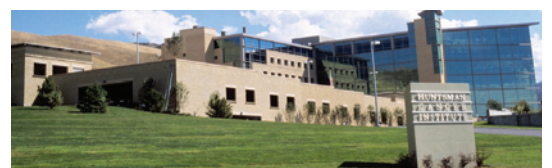


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## SLC firm is major manufacturer of railroad parts

By Andrew Haley

*The Enterprise*

Riders on the FrontRunner line between downtown and Provo benefit from a little-known Salt Lake City manufacturing firm specializing in supplying all of the sundry railroad parts needed to lay down tracks and keep trains reaching their destinations.

A&K Railroad Materials, based on Redwood Road, is a longstanding railroad parts supplier, selling used and new rails and rail tools, wood and steel railroad ties, tie plugs, frogs, guard rails, switches and switch components. Frogs are the plates that guide wheels at railroad crossings.

A&K also sells reclaimed wooden railroad ties used to buttress earthworks in landscaping. In a sense, that is the core of the company's business, as A&K founder and owner Kern Schumacher got started half a century ago when he and business partner Al Boyd began buying used wooden rail-

road ties from the Concord Naval Weapons Station in Concord, Calif., and selling them to area landscapers. Schumacher, 19 at the time, hired students from his alma mater, San Ramon High School, to lug the ties back to Danville over Easter break.

Boyd and Schumacher sawed the reclaimed ties into planks and sold them at a markup. They paid 6 cents for each tie and sold each plank for \$6. By the time he enrolled at the University of California-Berkeley, Schumacher was making \$40,000 a year.

In 1961, Boyd and Schumacher bought the mothballed Camp Stoneman Military Base and its 21 warehouses, located 40 miles from San Francisco. Within a year the pair had leased all of them. His consequent interest in buying up military surplus led Schumacher to Utah in 1963, where he and Boyd bought the defunct Clearfield Naval Supply Depot with the financial backing of

Schumacher's father.

Renamed the Freeport Center, the former naval base became a supply depot of another sort where clients like GE could store goods bound by rail to West Coast markets. Clients liked Salt Lake, with its natural positioning as a geographic corridor, and substantial railroad infrastructure leading along the old overland trails to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland. It was only a matter of time before Schumacher took an interest in maintaining, expanding, supplying and updating the railroads.

Today, Schumacher holds 90 percent of A&K, having bought out Boyd when he retired. The lion's share of his business is in railroad supply, though these days he is as much involved with mass transit as moving freight.

The size of its projects gives scope to the profitability of the company. According to the Utah Transparency Project, during construction of the Salt Lake to Provo FrontRunner line, UTA contracted with A&K for \$14,891,000 worth of rail procurement projects between fiscal years 2009 and 2012. Some \$12.5 million were spent in 2009 alone.

Al Spurlin, regional manager for Mountain States Contracting, which has been in the design-build, railroad construction and railroad maintenance business since 1983, said he has been using A&K for 30 years.

"They're a good outfit. I really enjoy working with the people there. They don't try to feed me full of baloney. They've been pretty upfront with us," Spurlin said.

In addition to supplying all of the parts

that go into building an active railroad line, A&K also provides a welding/continuous welding rail service, custom cutting the rails to spec for companies like Mountain States to install. Negotiating the logistics of such a capital-intensive industry is a major part of A&K's business, as the actualities of supplying railroad materials include the delivery of goods measured in tons to remote, often mountainous terrain rarely serviced by passable roads. According to Spurlin, avoiding delays is paramount to maintaining profitability in the railroad business and that is one more thing A&K does with aplomb.

"We take delivery by truck or by rail. They do a good job of getting it there when it's supposed to be there," he said.

According to Spurlin, the projects for which Mountain States contracts A&K are similar in size to those of the Salt Lake-Provo FrontRunner line. He estimated most of Mountain States' projects with A&K at "\$100,000 to \$10 million and above." Though A&K declined to disclose its revenues or number of employees, citing its privately held status, in 2008 Schumacher told *The North Lake Tahoe Bonanza* that A&K had roughly 450 employees. Despite the Great Recession, Spurlin said A&K has improved over the past decade.

A&K's service department also provides a track removal service as well as deliveries of completely assembled railroad turnouts. A&K maintains regional sales offices throughout the country and operates a Spanish-speaking international sales office in Houston that services Central and South America.

## A Utah Manufacturing Initiative

By Todd R. Bingham,

*President*

*Utah Manufacturers Association*

The business of making things with utility and adding value to raw materials is the essence of manufacturing. If you look around you in the room where you now are, nearly everything is manufactured. Manufacturing is one of Utah's basic industries and one that creates tremendous value in the economy. It is a creator of new wealth. Three industries create new wealth: agriculture, mining and manufacturing. All other industries create added value from an existing product and/or service provided.

Utah's manufacturing industry is very diverse, covering nearly every imaginable area, from aerospace and medical, from microchip and defense to composites and food to basic metal manufacturing. This is certainly not an exhaustive list; however, it gives us an idea of the broad nature of this critical industry.

It is Utah's diverse base in manufacturing that has allowed it to be the backbone of the economy since the early days of statehood. Manufacturers build plants and infrastructure that weather economic downturns and hire a variety of employees, from highly educated and skilled, to basic workers who develop much-needed valuable skills that benefit their respective companies.

Manufacturing has the staying power to continue to be the backbone of this economy; it continues to be Utah's strength. We owe much of the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed to the innovation and efficiency of manufacturing. We can count on them to continue to provide the highest standard of living anywhere in the world. Look around you anywhere and what you see are the efforts of manufacturers. We are the people who make things.

Manufacturing is the engine that drives American prosperity. It is central to our economic security and national security.

Manufacturing invents the future. Manufacturers are responsible for more than 70 percent of all private sector R&D, which ultimately benefits other manufacturing and non-manufacturing activities.

The United States is the world's largest exporter; 61 percent of all U.S. exports are manufactured goods, double the level of 10

years ago.

Over the past two decades manufacturing productivity gains have been more than double that of other economic sectors. These gains enable Americans to do more with less, increase our ability to compete and facilitate higher wages for all employees.

Manufacturing has been an important contributor to economic growth and tax receipts at all levels of government, contributing one-third of all corporate taxes

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# Top Manufacturing Counties in Utah

Ranked by Manufacturing Workforce

County	Total Population	Total Non-Farm Workforce	Manufacturing Workforce	County Average Wage	Manufacturing Wage in County	Number of Manufacturing Establishments	Top Companies in County
Salt Lake	1.05 million	602,353	52,471	\$3,667	\$4,529	1,640	<b>L3 Communications</b> (Communications Equipment) <b>The Sun Products Corporation</b> (Soap & Detergent) <b>Merit Medical Systems</b> (Surgical & Medical Instrument)
Utah	530,400	189,431	16,476	\$2,922	\$4,000	592	<b>IM Flash Technologies</b> (Electronic Products) <b>Nestle USA</b> (Food) <b>US Synthetic Corp.</b> (Nonmetallic Mineral Product)
Weber	234,400	91,866	12,047	\$2,985	\$3,970	253	<b>Autoliv</b> (Motor Vehicle Equipment) <b>Fresenius USA Manufacturing Inc.</b> (Medical Instrument) <b>Kimberly Clark Worldwide Inc.</b> (Sanitary Paper Product)
Cache	114,700	51,203	10,665	\$2,514	\$3,197	228	<b>Icon</b> (Sports & Athletic Equipment) <b>Schreiber Foods</b> (Cheese) <b>Hyclone Laboratories Inc.</b> (Pharmaceutical)
Davis	311,800	108,930	10,535	\$3,135	\$4,212	287	<b>Lifetime Products</b> (Sports & Athletic Equipment) <b>ATK Space Systems/Alliant</b> (Aerospace) <b>Utility Trailer Manufacturing Co.</b> (Truck Trailer)
Box Elder	50,300	16,089	4,478	\$2,650	\$3,777	73	<b>ATK Launch Systems</b> (Aerospace) <b>Autoliv</b> (Motor Vehicle Equipment) <b>Nucor Steel</b> (Steel Mill)
Washington	141,600	49,043	2,538	\$2,473	\$2,894	175	<b>Viracon</b> (Glass Product) <b>Wilson Electronics</b> (Communications Equipment) <b>RAM Manufacturing</b> (Fabricated Metal Products)
Tooele	59,300	16,020	1,725	\$3,632	\$4,110	40	<b>US Magnesium</b> (Primary Metals Manufacturing) <b>Detroit Diesel Remanufacturing</b> (Machinery) <b>Morton international</b> (Food)
Iron	46,700	15,090	1,351	\$2,431	\$3,240	74	<b>GENTAK</b> (Foam Product) <b>American Pacific Corp.</b> (Chemical Manufacturing) <b>Smead Manufacturing</b> (Paper Products)
Summit	37,600	21,043	799	\$3,021	\$5,156	61	<b>Triumph Gear Systems</b> (Aircraft Parts & Equipment) <b>Skullcandy Inc</b> (Electronic Products) <b>Reese Metal Work</b> (Metalworking)
Wasatch	24,400	6,329	196	\$2,686	\$3,437	34	<b>Redmond Minerals</b> (Nonmetallic Mineral Mining) <b>Probar</b> (Food) <b>Mountain Cabinetry Inc.</b> (Cabinetry)
<b>Statewide</b>	2.81 million	1.25 million	116,412	\$3,272	\$4,124	3,677	

## INITIATIVE

from page 11

collected by state and local governments.

Yet U.S. manufacturers are challenged as never before. They are on the front lines of the most intense global competition in history, when it is virtually impossible to raise prices. Yet, costs do rise and companies are faced with how to continue to compete in a competitive manner.

Manufacturing plays a significant role in our national economy, accounting for 11.7 percent of U.S. GDP. At the state level, manufacturers make equally significant contributions, 11.9 percent of the GSP in Utah. Employing nearly 10 percent of the workforce. Total output from manufacturing has been rising for the past several years and it was \$13.2 billion in 2009. In addition, the industry employs approximately 115,000 workers and creates an additional 300,000 related jobs in the state. The industry boasts an average monthly wage of \$3,962. Manufacturing compensation is just over 57 percent higher than other nonfarm employers in the state and second only to the mining industry.

Utah's manufacturing industry comprises the largest payroll in the state. The largest concentration of manufacturers, in descending order, operate in Salt Lake, Utah, Weber, Davis, Cache and Box Elder counties. In fact, Box Elder County boasts 41 percent of its employment in manufacturing.

Typically, larger economic multipliers are associated with manufacturing than most other industries because of the variety of allied businesses providing raw materials, services and other manufactured inputs to the manufacturing process. In fact, for

every \$1 in manufactured goods there is generated an additional \$1.37 worth of additional economic activity — more than any other economic sector.

Manufacturing has been hit hard by the recession and the rate of turnover is unacceptable. While better than most states, Utah can gain more stable and living wage jobs within the manufacturing industry than any other segment by focusing on this key industry:

The Utah Manufacturers Association recognizes this. It is a discussion that has been had internally for some time. In an effort to develop an initiative dedicated to increasing the manufacturing industry in the state, we went to other interested stakeholders to develop a proposal. UMA is in the process of developing this Utah Manufacturing Initiative. With your indulgence, I would like to explain the fundamentals of this initiative.

**The initiative will have the following objectives:**

- Produce actual results in terms of increased jobs and economic growth in this sector as measured by jobs, wages, new business starts, expansions and net profit increases.

- Develop ownership and agreement from industry leaders and government to address the most critical needs to achieve growth including policy, resources, regulation and trained workforce.

- Make the case for how important Utah manufacturing really is to the Utah economy.

**Methods for accomplishing the initiative:**

- Partner with key stakeholder groups: i.e., Utah Manufacturers Association, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Salt Lake Community

College, Utah College of Applied Technology, Department of Workforce Services, and the Utah System of Higher Education.

- Mobilize key industry leaders for the development of a steering committee and future implementation. Key leaders will come from partners as well as a potential mixture of the following segments of the industry.

- Food Manufacturing
- Natural Products
- Wood Products
- Energy Products Manufacturing
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Plastics and Rubber Products
- Primary Metal Products
- Non-metallic Mineral Product Manufacturing
- Fabricated Metal Products Manufacturing
- Machinery Manufacturing
- Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
- Medical Device Manufacturing
- Sports and Outdoor Equipment Manufacturing
- Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing
- Nutraceuticals Manufacturing
- Foundries

- Gather data from numerous sources, e.g., Manufacturers Extension Partnership, interviews and surveys, focus groups, labor and economic statistics.

- Establish industry agreement on strategy and priorities.

- Translate strategy into actionable initiatives with detailed implementation plans including timetables.

- Measure progress and outcomes with focused project management and reporting.

- Build political support with communications and engagement of leaders in governor's office and the legislature.

- Establish continuous improvement mechanism through UMA.

**Manufacturing Initiative Guiding Principles:**

- Industry-led initiative with key leader engagement.

- Listen to and address actual needs, e.g., raise public awareness across the state, assure skill availability, address regulatory issues, assure availability of resources to meet demands.

- Return on investment for time and money spent.

- Develop concrete strategy and disciplined project management to assure implementation.

- Measure and account for results rather than deliver another report.

In summation, this process of evaluating current conditions, obstacles and roadblocks for expanding manufacturing is just in the very initial stages.

While we don't currently have an accurate list of obstacles, impediments or challenges we may face as we embark on this initiative, moving forward with the stakeholder process will certainly afford us the opportunity to gain a firm grasp on such obstacles in time to potentially draft legislation to address such issues.

In closing, Utah's manufacturing industry exists to provide the products needed for daily life in today's modern world. Your quality of life is dependent on manufacturing. Efforts to expand this segment of the economy, we believe to be a great goal.

## Sustainability looks both inside and outside the walls of a manufacturing plant

By Paul Olsen

Manufacturing has benefitted from many implementations of continuous improvement. Quality circles, theory of constraint, six sigma and lean manufacturing are but a few of the concepts and tools that have helped companies improve quality, increase output efficiently and lower costs. The ultimate goal is to be competitive in a global marketplace, and to return a profit to stakeholders, be it a private or public company.

Another approach to continuous improvement considers the sustainability of a company's practices as it relates to materials, process and post-process, including delivery to the end customer. So, what do we mean by sustainability? The EPA says:

"Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations."

A number of companies with Utah manufacturing operations have made sustainability part of their corporate identity. Some examples are:

**Varian Medical Systems, Salt Lake City**

"Seeking to create long-term shareholder value by implementing environmentally sustainable business practices, Varian also seeks to minimize environmental

impact by incorporating pollution prevention and resource conservation principles in all its operations."<sup>1</sup>

**Lifetime, Clearfield**

"Lifetime continues to demonstrate that the use of ingenuity and creativity with environmental sustainability in mind can deliver consistent financial windfalls. Divisions throughout the entire company contribute to these efforts showing that every little bit makes a very big difference ..."

**CSM Global, Ogden**

"Doing business in a sustainable way is embedded in our long term strategy. Sustainability is driven in CSM through leadership commitment and a strategic approach. It is based on understanding the most relevant sustainability issues for our business and our stakeholders and balancing the elements of People, Planet and Profit ... For us, implementing sustainability means embedding it in our organization, setting and working towards our objectives, and engaging with partners over our entire value chain."

The common thread among the example company statements is a top-to-bottom sustainable culture, demonstration that pursuing sustainable practices is financially profitable, and that corporations have a responsibility towards natural resources management and the waste streams created by is operations.

Taken together with other continuous improvement efforts initiated by a company, sustainability is a look both inside

and outside the physical walls of a company plant. It considers materials from suppliers and their practices, transportation factors, energy demands and consumption, landfill use, air and noise pollution and safe use and handling of chemicals. The "Three-R" mantra common to sustainable practices is "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." To these I suggest a fourth, which in order of importance is first: "Refuse." If we can refuse in the first place to accept certain kinds of materials, or refuse inefficient shipment practices, or refuse to send anything to the landfill that can be reused or recycled, then we are a step closer to a sustainable culture.

How do we get there? Ideally, a company as a whole realizes sustainability must be one of the pillars of its success. From there, a study of current state practices can be made, identifying and measuring wastes streams including energy use, water use, landfill volume and costs, regulatory costs, etc. Frame these in relation to costs to the company (profits), effects on workers and the community (people) and impact on the planet (natural resources, environment). Then decide upon the measures and practices to take to commit to a sustainable business strategy. And perhaps, most importantly, empower workers at all levels to contribute, to be involved, to improve.

Some of this will require knowledge of best practices; training may be desirable. Teamwork will be a key. Recognition of our impact on those around us, and on the planet, must be accepted; we cannot throw

a pebble into water without creating ripples. One recent participant of training offered by MEP Utah and now certified by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers as a green manufacturing specialist put it this way: "Wow — talk about an eye opener! ... I will never view my work and home environment the same again."

Each of us must see our work and home environment balanced against sustainability.

Paul Olsen handles public relations and business development for the Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

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