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Royal Threads Receives Grant to Expand



Abigail Jose threads a logo on a pair of shorts Monday in the workroom at Royal Threads in Aberdeen.

By [Ted M. Natt Jr.](#)

Barry and Lori Pry have started up-fitting a 6,000-square-foot building adjacent to Royal Threads thanks in large part to a \$48,000 Building Reuse and Restoration grant from the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center.

The Prys are spending an additional six figures and mainly using local contractors to turn the building into a showcase for their products: in-house digitizing and embroidery, corporate and golf apparel, custom uniforms and logoed apparel.

"We wouldn't be doing this on such a large scale without the grant," Lori said. "It's the perfect scenario to be able to expand. It's a family business that slowly but surely has gotten a lot bigger."

Although the grant wasn't approved until last month, up-fitting began in October and is expected to be completed next month. The expansion is expected to create 10 new jobs for a company that was founded in 1995 and now has 55 employees.

Royal Threads is currently operating in 10,000 square feet of space at its corporate headquarters on N.C. 211 in Aberdeen. The company also has an embroidery operation in Durham.

"Everything right now is so tight in this building," Barry said. "The new building will bring everything in-house. This is a relationship business. We're fortunate that we've been able to grow our business and maintain a high level of customer service."

Local corporate customers include Golf Pride Golf Grips and Aberdeen Exterminating, but the Prys target schools, churches and other organizations in North and South Carolina.

"We try to help them grow through logoed apparel, which gets people excited," said Barry, a former professional golfer with extensive ties to that industry. "We love steering our

customers in the right direction. We try to find the right apparel, then dress it up with your logo."

One of the company's first big jobs was providing the volunteer uniforms for the 1996 U.S. Women's Open at Pine Needles.

"I worked with Pinehurst Championship Management on the deal, which subsequently led to business in the corporate market," Barry said.

The Prys have hired apparel industry veterans Bob Shay and Scott Grant within the past year to make direct sales in the two states. Shay and Grant typically take rolling racks of examples and brochures on their sales calls.

"It's really hard to pick things out of a catalog. People like to look, touch and feel," Lori says.

Shay said potential customers are more willing to buy now than they were three years ago at the height of the recession.

"It's headed in the right direction," he said.

Grant agreed, saying, "It was tight. It's loosening up a little bit."

The Prys believe that their company offers the best of both worlds in that it is big enough to handle large orders, yet small enough to give customers the one-on-one attention that is disappearing in today's marketplace.

"We are never satisfied until the customer is satisfied," Barry said. "When someone comes to us with an idea and a budget, we try to put them in the highest quality logoed apparel that they can afford."

Pat Corso, executive director of Moore County Partners in Progress, said the county is fortunate to have Royal Threads because the Prys could have easily consolidated operations in Raleigh, where the company does all of the embroidery for the Peter Millar golf apparel line.

"The Rural Center grant played a major role in retaining that business for us. That was the clincher," Corso says. "I think it's great that we were able to keep them."

Corso adds that the Prys are "excellent examples" of the types of entrepreneurs that Moore County is trying to attract and retain.

"Barry has had an extensive career in the apparel business and Lori is a terrific operator," Corso said. "They're expanding, hiring more people and working for a major brand. Hopefully, they'll continue to expand as time goes on."

The Prys plan to retain their corporate showroom in the main building and move their athletic showroom to the new building.

"Our business has grown 30 percent this year and I would expect it to be about the same for 2012," Lori said. "The new building will give us the opportunity to really service our customers. I just wish we had gone for more grant money because we're so busy."

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