



Outdoor Venture Corporation Uses Innovation & the Internet to Provide Shelter to U.S. Military Bases

Name: Outdoor Venture Corp.

Internet:

www.outdoorventure.com

Products/Services:

Designs and manufactures canvas-based products, including mobile shelters (tents) used by the U.S. Marines, Army and Air Force.

Location:

Stearns/McCreary County

Leadership:

J.C. Egnew,
Chairman and President
Lori Miller,
Chief Financial Officer
Joe Fields,
Business Development Manager

Employees: 250

Founded: 1972

Reach: U.S.

Advice for Growing

Companies: *"Know where the market you're serving is going and make sure you are the first to arrive there."*

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:

"The Internet has proven to be a tremendous informational tool and has helped us market our products."

Ways to Continue to Attract Best Workers:

"Employees want to hear more about benefits than rate of pay. At Outdoor Venture, we want them to feel like they're part of the family."

Stearns, Ky. — Innovation flourishes from a quiet coal town that once faced a depressed timber and coal economy. Thirty years ago job prospects were much different, prior to Outdoor Venture Corporation (OVC). Since the company's arrival, three other area companies, American Bag, Academy Broadway and Shelter-Pro, sprang from OVC. In addition, OVC's former building was sold to LeSportsac.

Today, Outdoor Venture's newest facility is located across the street from the historic town of Stearns, with the company's main offices, manufacturing, warehousing and shipping facilities. Additionally, the company owns two manufacturing facilities and is postured for expansion. While military orders rose slightly during the war in Afghanistan, when the company employed about 60, production surged with the conflict in Iraq, and the workforce swelled within a few months.

Outdoor Venture seeks to provide U.S. troops with the most functional shelter possible. The company provides a variety of canvas-based products, including temporary mobile shelters (tents) used by the Marines, Army, and Air Force. Outdoor Venture military tent shelters are used wherever U.S. military forces are deployed. The tents are set up as sleeping quarters as well as field hospitals, mess halls or supply tents. Generally they serve as large, quick setup shelters designed to shelter 15 to 30 people.

"We also have an affiliate company at the same location that supplies a line of Underbrush® speciality hunting clothing. With many of our suppliers located outside the United States, the Internet is a tremendous communications tool. It enables us to access our customers inventory control systems to determine the need for inventory replenishment of our products at multiple stores or locations throughout the United States" said J.C. Egnew, Chairman and President of Outdoor Venture. "The Internet not only builds brand awareness for our products, it is a condition of doing business with government agencies and large retailers. The Internet works for us 24-hours-a-day," added Egnew.

According to Egnew, The economy is technology driven. To remain competitive, companies must use technology to keep costs low and profits high. At Outdoor Venture, that includes the development of an online inventory control at multiple locations and electronic invoicing system that uses the Internet.

"When we first started, we had three competitors. Soon we had competitors all over the world," says Egnew. Product lifecycles are getting shorter and shorter and there are many more choices now. "Business is much more complex today."

Outdoor Venture Corporation maintains on-going working relationships with leading industrial fabric mills, converters and suppliers. In addition to being a prime military tent supplier, Outdoor Venture "teams" with other Department of Defense suppliers to offer subcontract manufacturing services. From initial design concept to full scale production, the company provides efficient manufacturing with experience in AutoCAD design, Gerber cutting, die cutting, freehand and programmable sewing, heat-sealing, laminating, automated adhesive spraying and drying, multilayer quilting and many other manufacturing processes.

Outdoor Venture has received numerous awards for innovative design changes resulting in thousands of dollars of savings to the United States military tent procurement program. Since 1984, they have delivered more than \$300 million dollars worth of military tents encompassing some 200 government contracts.

About KY 120: In the fast-pace world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. [connectkentucky](http://connectkentucky.com) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties to identify lessons learned on the path toward successful and sustainable innovation.