



Amazon.com Fulfillment Center and High-Speed Internet Breathe New Life into Taylor County

Name:
Amazon.com
Kentucky Fulfillment Center

Internet:
www.amazon.com

Products/Services:
On-line Retailer

Location:
Campbellsville/ Taylor County

Leadership:
Jeff Bezo,
Chief Executive Officer
Mike Newcomb,
General Manager of Kentucky
Fulfillment Center

Employees: 600

Founded:
Amazon.com 1994
Amazon.com Campbellsville
Fulfillment Center 1999

Reach: International

Innovative Insight:
"We believe that the longer a potential customer remains on a Web site, the more apt they are to spend more money and remain a loyal customer."

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:
"The three most important things for our customer base is technology, technology, technology. The Internet allows us to compete wherever we are."

Advice to Growing Companies: *"By building new technologies, you have the opportunity to offer a better customer experience. You have to continue to innovate."*

Campbellsville, KY— Once filled with intimate apparel, active wear and assorted basics, Taylor County's Fruit of the Loom distribution facility is now home to Amazon.com, the leading Internet retailer of books, music, and videos.

According to Amazon.com CEO, Jeff Bezos, technology is critical to its business and provides a vital distinction from the competition and ultimately provides the best customer experience possible. Amazon.com is superb in its attention to logistics which has resulted in consistent, competent delivering of the goods. This same attention to customer service and logistics is how Amazon.com zeroed in on Taylor County, with its prime shipping location.

Taylor County's extensive infrastructure and its willing citizens became an ideal location for one of two Amazon.com distribution centers established in Kentucky. The Taylor County location allows for more efficient service to Amazon.com customers in the Midwestern United States.

"While technology is an important business recruitment tool, our team saw it as a means to enable existing businesses to be successful and to help them survive and grow," said Kevin Sheilley, Executive Director of Team Taylor County.

Prior to Amazon.com's arrival, Team Taylor County, an organization of local leaders, began to research possible high-speed Internet suppliers. Due to the lack of local capabilities, the county looked to the Kentucky League of Cities (KLC) to assist in locating an Internet service supplier. For six months, the KLC researched possible Internet service providers for the county, eventually choosing Waverider, a Toronto-based wireless broadband provider. Waverider, the wireless Internet provider, encouraged other traditional providers to make significant investments so that broadband is now available nearly countywide and in many cases by at least two or three competitive providers.

By October of 1999, Amazon.com had opened its doors in Taylor County employing 500 full-time workers and continues to have seasonal increases in employment, all of which are primarily filled by local residents. Amazon.com also saw structural growth as its 570,000 square foot facility expanded to nearly 800,000 square feet full of merchandise sold by the Internet retailer.

However, the unprecedented growth in Taylor County is not the result of Amazon.com alone. Internet accessibility and the efforts of Team Taylor County have attracted other businesses to Central Kentucky area, such as Frost-Arnett, a national debt collecting service. As a result of the economic growth, the county's workforce has gained over 3,500 jobs in the last three years. The residents of Taylor County remain resilient and continue to work to attract businesses to the Central Kentucky Area.

"Fortunately, it's a very resilient community and we've bounced back, replaced all the jobs we lost and we're actually on the plus side of things now," Sheilley said.

With current unemployment rates as low as 5.2%, Taylor County citizens embrace this economic prosperity, while not forgetting the hardships that plagued the community six years earlier.

About KY 120:

In the fast-paced world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](http://connectkentucky.org) initiative, CiTE (Center for Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties. For more information visit our Web site at www.connectkentucky.org or call 270.781.4320.