

## PSP, the Little Shop that Could



Tucked in an industrial park in Jackson Center, Pennsylvania, Penn Stainless Products Inc. is growing slowly but steadily, having found a niche in the stainless-steel industry.

“We carry a full product line of stainless steel, and we sell to the little guys, the ones the big companies tend to overlook,” said Jason Martineau, regional general manager of PSP. The company, which is based in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, opened a branch in Jackson

Center three years ago.

“About 15 years ago we started sending one truck weekly to Pittsburgh from our Quakertown location, and 10 years ago we started sending a truck five days a week to Pittsburgh,” Martineau said. “So by opening this branch, we’re closer to our clients, plus we have I-80 and I-79 very close,” he added.

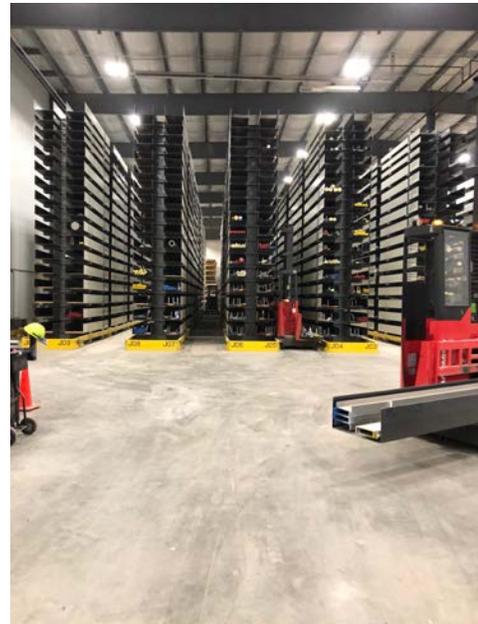
PSP supplies many sizes and grades of stainless steel, according to its website. Its products include stainless steel that is rolled flat, made into bars, shaped into pipes, and cut into angles. PSP can plasma-cut sheet stainless steel and polish it as well.

Obviously, PSP is doing something right: In its three years of existence in Jackson Center, it has grown almost 25 percent a year, according to Martineau. “Every six months we’ve been adding one or two employees,” Martineau said.

Another positive attribute about PSP since it opened its doors 40 years ago in Quakertown is its employment record. “We’ve never laid off anyone in the entire history of the company,” Martineau said.

And that’s not because of wage stagnation at PSP. “We give cost-of-living wage increases, plus longevity raises,” Martineau said. PSP currently employs four people in sales and eight people in its Jackson Center shop. Martineau noted that the local shop pays the same wages as the main facility in Quakertown does.

A few elements may explain the secret to PSP’s success--and optimistic future. “We built our storage facility so that it can be easily expanded,” Martineau said. “Our owner, Jim Seward,



wanted to stay focused on only stainless steel, and we use local lumber for packing materials,” he added.

Another part of PSP’s philosophy is to not waste anything. “We keep all scrap and sell it locally to whoever may need it,” Martineau said.

PSP’s regional general manager thinks his business will reap benefits from the Shell ethylene cracker plant being built in Monaca, Pennsylvania. “Stainless steel tanks will be used by businesses that process wastewater that’s used in the petrochemical industry,” Martineau said. When PSP hires a new employee, Martineau said the right mindset and work ethic matter as much as anything. “Employees in the shop will need some computer skills to input specifics of the invoices, but we’ll train them how to do that,” he added.

PSP exposes new shop employees to all aspects of the business, from the arrival of the raw materials to the loading of the finished product onto the truck, according to Martineau. “We are looking for a **summer intern**. Preferably, we’d like someone with a mechanical engineering background to design some equipment for us,” Martineau said.

In three years, PSP has gone from two employees to 12 employees, according to Martineau. And with its steady but sure growth, its proving that it’s the little shop that could.