

Smart money on small business

By Scott Whipple, *New Britain Herald*

The secret's out. Smart money is on small businesses to pull off New Britain's economic recovery.

Realizing the critical role small business plays in the state's economy, Gov. M. Jodi Rell has declared this week "Small Business Week in the state." Icing on the cake were the Small Business Awards presented last week at the Belvedere Hotel in New Haven. Peter Paul Electronics of New Britain took the prize for "Small Business Exporter of the Year."

Peter Paul has been a family-owned business with headquarters in New Britain for nearly 60 years. They manufacture solenoid and specialty valves and employ 130 workers.

The company has been rewarded with ISO and an enviable list of global certifications which enable them to participate in foreign markets. Peter Paul's people have years of experience, dedication and pride, and they turn out products with a reputation for excellence.

Last Thursday, Michael Mangiafico II, operations manager, accepted the award for the company and its president, his Uncle Paul. Michael said he deeply appreciated his father and uncle's vision to grow the business using their worldwide network of sales channels.

In the 1940's Peter Paul was a coil manufacturer and Paul Mangiafico Sr. the founder (Michael's grandfather) turned the business into one of the largest coil manufacturers in the US. He had a vision of gaining a marketable product line and through innovation, courage and determination entered the solenoid valve industry in the 50's. Paul Sr. came over from Sicily when he was 11. He was strong willed and contrary to the advice of many of his peers grew his vision to expand Peter Paul's markets beyond the US into Europe.

In the 60's because of its short lead times and high quality Peter Paul penetrated the European Markets. During the 70's its markets expanded to Asia. In the 80's under the leadership of its current president, sales channels in Asia and Europe grew substantially. The company penetrated the Central/South American and African markets during the 90's.

Peter Paul currently markets its products worldwide and sells them in more than 60 countries on all continents. Company customers overseas, like those in the US, continue to press for innovative solutions with shorter lead times.

In his acceptance speech, Michael Mangiafico said Peter Paul Electronics is meeting and exceeding those demands.

"We're undergoing continuous improvement," he said, "(and) are on year two of our lean transformation which has been a phenomenal success."

He thanked the SBA for funding this transformation.

Michael also credited Rick Mullins, and Tom Lorenzetti of **Central Connecticut State University's Institute for Technology & Business Development**.

"They have been a tremendous help in our lean transformation and many other areas of improving our business," he said. "They run an outstanding organization committed to improving Connecticut manufacturing."

With an institute like ITBD and companies like Peter Paul, Acme-Monaco, Okay Industries and others who needs the Fafnirs, North and Judd's and American Hardwares?

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