

Bowhunter Business

DEDICATED TO KEEPING OUR READERS ABREAST OF CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE GROWING ARCHERY INDUSTRY.

Peter Luccisano had a problem. The 30-year-old carpenter and part-time truck driver had just finished his shift of snow plowing at midnight, and as he gathered his hunting gear to meet his brother by 4 a.m., he realized that his Hot Seat was damaged. The weather was cold, and snow covered most of the New England deer woods. Peter didn't want to hit the frigid woodlands without a seat, and as he pondered his dilemma, he thought of laminating together some pieces of foam house-siding insulation. He tried it, and it worked. Peter Luccisano's spark of an idea solved his immediate problem, and it eventually changed the rest of his life. He still has his first foam seat.

The foam cushion worked so well that Peter was soon fabricating seats for his hunting buddies. He was also contemplating "hanging up his hammer" for a life in the hunting industry. It is often said, "Necessity is the mother of invention." In Luccisano's case, necessity helped him launch a new career. Thirteen years later he is still going strong and has not stopped to look back, to ponder "What if?"

What first started as a one-product cottage industry has grown into an enterprise with annual sales as high as \$750,000. Today, servicing some 700 accounts requires nine full-time employees, including Luccisano and Linda Collupy, his office manager for the past eight years. Northeast currently occupies 20,000 square feet of a 100-year-

manufacturer's
PROFILE
BY FRED WALLACE

Northeast Products



Northeast Products' Office Manager Linda Collupy holds the new Ultra Deluxe Therma-a-Seat®, and owner Peter Luccisano holds the original.

old mill building on Franklin Street in Lawrence, Massachusetts, about 50 miles north of Boston.

"The first real education I received was in the variety, types, and properties of closed-cell foams. There are many different foams, each with its own attributes. Initially I gravitated to Evazote, a type of foam manufactured in England and imported into the U.S.. I found that purely from a performance standpoint, it was the best. I still think it is.

"We continue to sell a great number of my original 'Therma-a-Seat' made of Evazote. It's my favorite, and it's the best when it comes to durability. In fact, it

has all the features sportsmen prefer. Unfortunately it's also very expensive. Consequently, we also offer foams for the price-sensitive buyer.

"Back in 1992 and '93 we learned a very important lesson when competitors introduced dirt-cheap copycat products and almost put us out of business. They were using inexpensive foams in products that looked like ours but delivered less than optimum results. But, unfortunately, by visual inspection alone the general buyer couldn't tell the difference between Northeast and its competitors.

"We made our comeback by offering a wide variety of prod-

ucts and price levels," Peter continued. "That way we had something to sell almost every potential customer. Spreading our name by word-of-mouth, through national advertising, and by attending both trade and consumer shows helped build our brand name recognition."

Northeast Products' latest catalog offers a variety of products for bowhunters, including cushions for both treestands and ground blinds. These cushions come in solid colors as well as camo patterns, including Realtree. The Therma-A-Mat for treestand platforms and Therma-A-Grip bow handle warmer are specifically made for bowhunters. Cold Stopper pack boot foam replacements and Hot Footers heat-retaining shoe insoles round out the product line.

Different degrees of waterproofness, durability, weight, comfort, flexibility, and noise. Peter Luccisano explained, "The challenge is to match the right foam to the application. We do all of our manufacturing in-house, including pattern screening and cover fabric application. This way we have total control of our inventory levels and quality, and we benefit from the added-value operations. And, by manufacturing in-house we have total control over costs and overhead expenses."

Northeast Products' comfortable cold weather gear is handled by archery pro shops, catalogers, and mass merchants. Owner/Founder Peter

Luccisano feels that actively developing and introducing new products, continuing to advertise nationally, maintaining high quality standards, delivering products quickly, and satisfying individual customer's requests are some of Northeast Products'

secrets of success. But he really believes that his "secret weapon" is attending consumer shows.

"I personally attend a lot of shows and talk one on one with the hunters who use my products," Peter said. "Those hunters provide the very best

feedback I can get. They tell me what's working, what needs to be changed, and how best to tailor our products to their specific needs. After 13 years I still come home from every show with lots of new ideas, fresh opinions, and input that help us stay abreast of

our segment of the industry."

For a product catalog, contact: Northeast Products, P.O. Box 1648, 5 Franklin Street, Dept. BH, Lawrence, MA 01842-3648; (978) 683-5434; fax (978) 686-4753; www.therm-a-seat.com. **BB**

The Archery Manufacturers and Merchants Organization (AMO) recently invited a group of traditional archery companies to participate in the first AMO Traditional Equipment Committee. This newly formed volunteer committee will meet and work under AMO direction to solve shared problems and strive toward common goals. The AMO fully expects everyone in the traditional archery business to become active in this unique outreach group.

"This is an important — and nostalgic — return to AMO's founding roots when all archery manufacturers in the 1950s were 'traditional' archery manufacturers," said AMO President Dick Lattimer. "We hope this will be a big help to those who take part in our new Committee, to others who make traditional equipment, and for the sport and industry as a whole."

AMO news

Traditional Committee Formed

The current nine-member volunteer committee members are: Keith Chastain, J. K. Chastain Archery; Timothy Cosgrove, Kustom King Arrows; Randall R. Dehnel, Saxon Archery Manufacturing; Nicholas Gray, Woodland Traditional Archery; Jerry Hill, Jerry Hill Longbow Company; Bob Lee, Bob Lee Archery; Ron Pittsley, Darton Archery; Jim Ploen, B&J Archery Manufacturers; and Dick Robertson, Robertson Stykbow. Industry members who would like to participate in the committee's future activities should call AMO at (352) 377-8262.

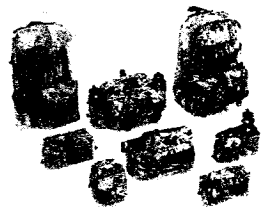
The committee has set the following goals: 1) Develop new standards for all traditional bows, strings, arrows, etc.; 2) Work with all archery organizations to help make them more friendly toward traditional archers; 3) Simplify the definition of an American Longbow; 4) Support the use of wood arrows for recreational target rounds; 5) Promote the use of traditional bows; 6) Teach barebow shooting; 7) Tighten tolerances for allowable equipment on traditional bows; 8) Speak with a unified voice to the archery industry; 9) Re-interpret "modern" traditional gear;

10) Promote the effectiveness of traditional equipment; 11) Attempt to get more traditional equipment manufacturers to display at the AMO trade show; 12) Work to unite traditional and compound shooters and to promote both types of bows; 13) Develop the proper arrow spine (of aluminum and graphite shafts) for longbows, self-bows, and recurves; 14) Ensure that more "garage operators" pay the federal excise tax; 15) Help new traditional dealers decide which products to stock; 16) Increase international sales of traditional equipment; and 17) Develop an AMO bow test for recurves and longbows (not 30-inch draw).

Don't miss your chance to visit the AMO Archery Trade Show in Columbus, Ohio, January 8-10, 1999! Contact: AMO, 4131 NW 28th Lane, Suite #7, Gainesville, FL 32606; (352) 377-8262; fax (352) 375-3961. **BB**

New Pack Line Produced

The new MPI Outdoors line of backpacks, day packs, and fanny packs is designed for tough hunting conditions. You'll like this line's Saddle-Cloth™ pack fabric in Advantage™, Realtree® X-tra, or



Mossy Oak® camo. Contact: MPI Outdoors, 85 Flagship Dr., Suite D, Dept. BH, Andover, MA 01845-6160; (800) 343-5827; fax (978) 685-2992; www.mpioutdoors.com.

Need an Extra Hand?

The new Extra Hand Bow Stand from Hoosier Hunting

what's NEW

Toys™ uses a unique 2.6-ounce bow bracket that attaches to your bow and inserts into three different styles of bow holders, including treestand, ground blind, and target range models. The treestand model folds out of the way. All hardware is included. Contact: Hoosier Hunting Toys™, 905

W Ferry St., Dept. BH, Cayuga, IN 47928; 1-877-492-4749 to place credit card orders.

Keep Warm!

The Heater Body Suit is designed for cold weather hunting. The suit locks in your body warmth and then easily slides off your upper body for the shot that counts. The Heater Body Suit has a windproof-waterproof barrier combined with 10 ounces of Hollofill insulation (20 ounces around the feet). Contact: TSS Equipment Co.,