

Oregon Cutting Systems

The world's leading manufacturer of cutting chain, guide bars, and accessories for chainsaws and mechanical timber harvesters, Oregon Cutting Systems (OCS) moved into its first bona fide manufacturing plant in Milwaukie at 9701 SE McLoughlin during 1955. Then called Oregon Saw Chain Manufacturing Corp., the company's move from the founder's basement to a 5,000-square-foot Portland garage and, finally, to the 65,000-square-foot Milwaukie facility was long overdue. By then, it was already a multinational corporation exceeding \$1 million in sales. Today, OCS employs more than 1,000 manufacturing and administrative employees at its 300,000-square-foot world headquarters in Milwaukie, from which it oversees more than \$400 million in sales.

Among reasons the cutting chain leader has flourished in Milwaukie is a certain symbiosis with the community, says Noel Hingley, Vice President of Manufacturing.

"We've been able to expand as needed, and with minimal red-tape, to keep up with our growing business," he says, noting that "you can have reasonable conversations with the folks at City Hall." The city's public services are also very good, he says. "The Milwaukie police and fire department are very responsive and they're familiar with our specific issues."

Of particular importance to OCS has been access to a qualified labor force, says Gale Long, Vice President of Human Resources. One of the company's earliest executives, John Gray, was actively engaged in building a community labor pool that would be a source of pride for the Pacific Northwest, Long says. "We've continued along those lines through our OCS College Benefit program. Also, Clackamas Community College has been a great partner in helping us educate our workforce."

Long says the company "definitely mentions being an hour from the beach or the mountains" when posting job openings. "We think it's a real selling point for our location." At the same time, employees have many options for housing – from inner-city (Portland) condominiums, to small suburbs, to rural acreage – that is relatively affordable.

Other benefits identified by Hingley and Long include proximity to major highways and the Portland International Airport (a plus for both shipping and employee commutes), a comfortable "small-town" environment, a great partnership



At a Glance: OCS

Now a global giant, OCS had very humble beginnings. When Oregon logger/ inventor Joseph Cox saw a timber-beetle larva easily gnawing through a tree stump one day in 1947, he was moved to replicate its alternating C-shaped jaws in steel. The result, created in his basement, revolutionized the logging industry and quickly became the most widely used saw chain worldwide.

Today, OCS, a division of Blount, International Inc. (formerly Omark Industries), produces saw chain, guide bars, chain drive sprockets, saw chain sharpening accessories, lawn mower blades and outdoor care products using state-of-the-art equipment. Its Milwaukie headquarters also houses its Industrial Cutting Systems operation, which makes and markets specialty tools to cut masonry and concrete.

OCS products are sold in more than 130 countries. Many of the world's leading chainsaw manufacturers use Oregon® products as original equipment on their saws.

with the local community college, and relatively low crime rates.

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