

Gutterglove Brings China Manufacturing Back To California

Rocklin, California manufacturer Gutterglove, Inc., will bring its gutter guard manufacturing from China back to California by second quarter 2012. This will infuse millions of dollars back into the Golden State, create new jobs, and hopefully set an example that other manufacturers can follow.

Robert Lenney, founder of Gutterglove, Inc. and inventor of its multi-patented line of gutter protection systems, started off in 2003 by manufacturing parts through Kaiser Aluminum in Southern California.

“Originally, my plans were to make the gutter guards in California, but because the parts used were from high end, high quality materials, they were very expensive to make,” says Lenney. “It cost significantly more to make our gutter guards than it cost our competitors to make theirs.”

Lenney’s most popular gutter guard, Gutterglove Pro, uses an alloy type 6063 aluminum frame that is anodized and fabricated for the purpose of supporting an alloy type 316 surgical stainless steel plain weave micro-mesh. When installed on the gutter, the fine mesh keeps out leaves, pine needles, and even tiny roof sand grit. Lenney’s Gutterglove Pro product received the highest rating out of 19 gutter guards tested in the Consumer Reports September 2010 and May 2011 magazine issues.

In 2004, due to increasing manufacturing costs, Lenney sought out aluminum extrusion giant Sapa Extrusions of Portland, Oregon to make his gutter guard parts. However, due to continued rising costs to manufacture and the pressure to reduce costs in order to remain competitive, Lenney sent out a worldwide bid request in 2006 for extrusion companies to quote on making the Gutterglove gutter guard.

Lenney received numerous estimates from companies around the world located in countries such as South Africa, India, Mexico, and China. Lenney ultimately chose manufacturing companies in China to work with.

“Not only were the prices in China more competitive than other countries, their customer service was better,” replies Lenney. “I didn’t feel comfortable taking manufacturing to China at all, but my options were limited.”

In 2011, the notoriety of Gutterglove reached the eyes and ears of the Army Corps of Engineers. The popular gutter guard soon became a spec for gutters on many buildings at US military bases around the country. However, to qualify for the Buy American Act passed by congress and signed by President Hoover in 1933, Gutterglove needed to be made in the USA.

The last time Lenney received quotes from US part manufacturers was back in 2006, and he had little hope that it would be cost effective to make Gutterglove this time around. However, Lenney was determined to find a way to make Gutterglove competitively in the US so that it would comply with US regulations and qualify to be used by the US Government.

In the second quarter of 2011, Lenney sent out bid requests to numerous part manufacturers throughout the United States. As weeks went by, Lenney nervously awaited quotes to come in for extruding, anodizing and fabricating his aluminum based product.

Unexpectedly, several extrusion companies in Southern California came back with quotes that were about 2% more than the Chinese manufacturers. Evaluating this marginal increase closely, it was determined that it would be more feasible to manufacture in California than China. With improved assembly processes of Gutterglove's products at their Rocklin, California corporate facility, the cost savings would outweigh the slight increase in part manufacturing.

With Gutterglove, Inc.'s sales increasing over 40% a year, the benefits would be received warmly into the California economy. Lenney made the choice to bring manufacturing back to California.

This also opens up opportunities for Gutterglove to export its gutter protection systems. "Made In The USA" products are perceived with higher value in other countries and can dramatically increase sales for the company, which in turn brings more stability into the US economy.

David Snyder, the Director of Economic Development for the County of Placer, says that bringing manufacturing back to the US is welcomed and appreciated.

Snyder comments, "Gutterglove is to be applauded for this decision and all levels of government should support them in every way possible to ensure their success." He went on to say, "Manufacturing's contribution to our economy cannot be overstated. Its multiplier effect creates jobs throughout the supply chain; for every new manufacturing job created, 2.5 additional jobs are created in other sectors."

Most of Gutterglove, Inc.'s products are now made in California. By the end of the 2nd quarter 2012, all product lines will be manufactured in California. Lenney can now proudly say that Gutterglove is "Made-In-The-USA".

The significant growth of the company introduced many financial challenges, so Lenney brought on seasoned financial expert Bill Wright to be its Chief Financial Officer.

Wright comments, "With a company going through such rapid revenue growth, I believe that my experience in public accounting, financial executive and equity capital fund management, and prior business ownership experiences can help Gutterglove, Inc. manage the growth and develop scalability."

The company is currently seeking up to \$2.5 million dollars in debt and equity capital to assist with these transitions of growth. Gutterglove is also considering options of partnering with home improvement product type distribution entities that would benefit from its product line up.

Lenney also is a religious man and caters to the Christian faith. Modeling the concept of what In-N-Out Burger prints on the bottom of their soda cups, Gutterglove has "John 3:16" stamped into the aluminum on every piece of Gutterglove Pro.

Other gutter guard products of Lenney's cater to the Do-It-Yourself market and are being sold on Sears.com, OSH.com and several others. Lenney is also currently working a deal with Costco.

More information can be found at www.Gutterglove.com.

About Gutterglove Gutterguard

The company was founded in 1996 and is located in Rocklin, California. Gutterglove, Inc. continues to invent state-of-the-art micro-mesh gutter guards and has multiple brands that are available through a network of dealers throughout North America, through ecommerce or specific targeted stores. For more information, call 877-662-5644, or visit: www.Gutterglove.com. Robert Lenney is also an Accredited Professional through the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association (www.arcsa.org).

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