

nuts & bolts

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Tennsco at 50

When one takes a look back at the 50 years Tennsco has been in business, some things haven't changed. Metal still comes in through bay delivery doors. It gets formed into storage cabinets, lockers, work benches and shelving before being painted, boxed and shipped out.

What has changed tremendously is the number of people involved in the process, how the metal gets changed into product and how many times a day the above process gets replicated.

Part 1 of a series

To a person, Tennsco long-timers point out that anyone who had a Rip Van Winkle-like experience of seeing the Tennsco of 1962 and the Tennsco of 2012 wouldn't recognize the place.

"When I sit back and think, I used to take the orders home and lay them out in the floor by truck route," said Vice President of Manufacturing/Plant 1 Manager Jerry Estes. "Now the computer does it. It's so advanced it's unbelievable."

Stopping to think of other things younger employees wouldn't believe, Estes said "there were no calculators!", but then struggled to think of the contraption's name the staff used to add up several long numbers. "It made a noise... brrrrrech, brrrrrech. I guess I'll have to look it up in a prehistoric book!"

But not this day. Estes was too busy. In fact, his brain was moving so fast he had to really think how long he'd worked at Tennsco. For the record, it's 44 years...the same as two other long-timers: Vice President for Manufacturing/Plant 2 Manager Roy Stinson and Vice President of Purchasing Phyllis Jones. They all started together.

Estes got a job in Tennsco's office

two weeks after getting out of Vietnam and the U.S. Army. "I did anything they needed done in the office, from costing and scheduling to routing trucks and purchasing...Nothing's done like we used to," Estes said.

Estes said the biggest change has been the size of the operation and all the technological advances...the conversion from liquid paint to powder paint, more modern controlled machines (product is produced by one and two processes on one machine as opposed to moving that product from one machine to the next).

Football on Sundays

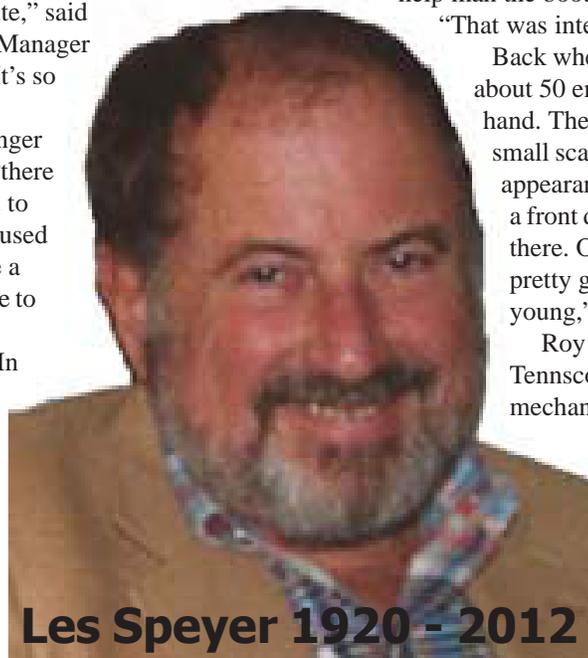
Stinson said early on there wasn't a big sales staff or engineering staff. All the staff members pitched in on all the jobs. "We'd help man the booth at (trade) shows," Stinson said.

"That was interesting."

Back when he joined Tennsco, there were only about 50 employees. "Everything was done by hand. There was no progressive tooling. It was small scale, very labor intensive. Even the appearance of the place has changed... we had a front dock and a miniature football field there. On Sundays we'd play. I've gotten hurt pretty good at times. We thought we were young," he said with a laugh.

Roy Stinson had an unplanned route to Tennsco. He was enrolled in the automotive mechanics at the Dickson Area Vocational

Technical School (now the Tennessee Technology Center at Dickson) when the instructor died. Administrators moved the auto students to welding class, electronics and drafting.



Les Speyer 1920 - 2012

Tennsco at 50

Continued from page 1

“I got the basics of them all. I graduated from automotive with no intention of being a mechanic,” he said. He joined Tennsco using the skills he picked up by chance.

“I use those skills to this day,” he said. In his 44 years with Tennsco, Stinson has moved through the ranks: pressman, utility man, lead man, foreman and general foreman. When Tennsco bought the Winner Boats manufacturing plant in 1980, Stinson was made plant manager, now overseeing the work of hundreds at Tennsco’s Plant 2.

Stinson said it took about a year to get everything built and installed at Plant 2. He said the firm went from making welded cabinets with a delivery time of 12-16 weeks producing 40 to 50 cabinets a day to producing hundreds a day.

Stinson remembers traveling the country, with founder Les Speyer in the cockpit of his airplane, buying equipment in places like Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

Stinson kind of identified with Speyer. “I’m kind of a hands-on guy with a big interest in shipping. If you can’t get the product out the door...” he said, then the customer is let down.

Speyer started out hands-on. Stinson said he’d always heard the stories of Speyer making folding tables in his Chicago home garage. As the operation grew, “he would just replace himself,” Stinson said, and hire folks to help with the work.

Only one job in a life

Phyllis Jones hasn’t created a resume in nearly half a century. Tennsco is the one and only place she’s ever worked.

“This was my first and only job,” Jones said. “I took typing in school, came to Tennsco and started typing orders.

“We were a very small company. All different ages. There were probably 10 people when we started in the old house (a former residence on Scott Street). I started out in the living room and got promoted to the kitchen. I was in there with Jerry (Estes) helping with cost estimating of products.”

Jones said Tennsco has grown to the point “I don’t even know everybody’s name. And we started out making a few products. Now, there’s no telling how many we have.”

As the vice president for purchasing, Jones buys all the steel that goes into Tennsco products and she’s involved in scheduling - mostly for Plant 1. At this point she’s still doing that manually.

“I think the computer has created greater paper piles,” Jones said. “It could be I’m printing too many reports. When you grow up with paper, it’s hard to let go.”



A picture from the “old days” (L to R) showing Chuck Lazareth, Les Speyer, Jim Patrick, Paul “Bud” Liebtag and Jim Hill. The woman in front is unidentified.

Raising Dorothy

But Estes, Stinson and Jones don’t hold the longevity record. That belongs to Dorothy Leegon. She was 19 years old when she went to work for Speyer four years after he founded Tennsco.

She started as the receptionist. She thinks there were about 10 folks working in the office...if you could call it that. She worked in the kitchen. Hearing Leegon talk about her early days you realize her early office equipment is now in museums...a manual typewriter, a rotary dial phone (she thinks it had two lines).

“I always told that Mr. (Les) Speyer and Joe Youree (retired Executive Vice President) and Tennsco raised me,” said the grandmother of five. “They were like a second family and still are today.”

One of her chief duties early on was a hand-typed report of daily shipments. It was about a page. That wasn’t enough typing to keep her warm in the house that was Tennsco’s first office. “It was always cold,” she said with a chuckle. “That’s one of the things I really remember.”



Dorothy Leegon

The early years

Dickson Realtor Jim Hill predated Dorothy Leegon’s tenure at Tennsco. Hill was Tennsco’s assistant sales manager then sales manager for almost four years from 1965 to 1969.

“We used to say it was on the corner of Broad and Dull (streets),” Hill said with a chuckle.

Hill had his own circuitous route to get to Tennsco. He was a hometown boy raised in White Bluff. Like legions of other Southerners, he’d gone to Detroit to work in an automotive plant. He read about a boat company in Dickson so he decided to visit the boat show when it came to Detroit. Hill met the owner of Dickson’s Winner Boats, Peter Lufkin, who invited him to return home and work in boat production. Hill moved back to Dickson and became an assembly line foreman in the buildings that are now Tennsco Plants 2 and 3. Joe Youree moved in next door and became Hill’s neighbor on Pond Lane.

Tennsco sold mostly in Tennessee border states and east of the Mississippi. At that point, the company had just two or three salesmen and used manufacturers’ reps as salesmen. Hill could still rattle off a geographic listing of lower Mississippi towns from having traveled that territory frequently.

Catalogs weren’t quite the production back then. “We would make up our new catalog every year. It wasn’t a big catalog – maybe 10-12 pages,” he said.

The firm used an advertising agency from Speyer’s former home in Chicago. It’s also where Speyer got his start in business with Midwest Folding Products – a folding table production company. Hill noted that the work ethic that was evident among Tennsco employees was evident at Midwest, too. At some point there was a fire in the plant there. The employees came together and built the plant back because it was so important to them, Hill said.

Hill’s memories go back to Les Speyer’s dad, Al Speyer. “I can still see him (Al Speyer) with his hat, black overcoat and Cadillac. He liked to demonstrate how tough the folding tables were.”

Midwest Folding Products had a touching beginning.

Les Speyer had requested that a part of his military salary be sent back to assist his mother during the war. “Things were tight back home, said Tennsco President Stuart Speyer, “and my dad wanted to help provide.”

Instead of spending the money, Les’ mom saved it all. It amounted to about \$25,000 which was his seed money for Midwest. Les made the folding tables in his garage and sold them out of his station wagon.

Lockers a big product line

Shelving was Tennsco’s big product then – plain metal shelving, Hill said, as well as six feet tall storage cabinets. A lot of what was shipped out had to be assembled. Then the company grew into filing cabinets. Hill was on board when Tennsco introduced a lateral filing cabinet in about 1965 or 1966.

Then came lockers. “That was a big one,” Hill said. “Metal lockers. We sold a lot to schools.” He went on rattling off new

products that came on line: metal service desks, tool carts, automotive parts bins and eventually slotted angle shelving.

There was plenty of travel and entertaining with Hill’s job. He remembered trade shows in Atlantic City, Chicago and New York – some with 25,000 to 30,000 attendees.

Hill also remembers the Tennsco office getting cramped as the company grew. “I think four folks shared the dining room. I thought I’d like more privacy. The house had a front porch. I thought we could close in the side walls. I suggested that and got it done and I got my private office. It was on the front porch.”

“We had some good people out there,” he said of Tennsco. “It was kinda fun being there...seeing it grow.”

Tennsco got its start in Dickson when Les Speyer bought the former KF Kline plant on Broad Street. The company produced bank vaults as a subsidiary of Diebold. That’s how Joe Youree came to be a part of Tennsco.

Move to Dickson

Youree was working for KF Kline when it bankrupted and closed in the fall of 1961. Speyer bought the plant and Tennsco was born on Jan. 2, 1962.

Youree was one of 12 employees Kline employees that Speyer hired. Youree was the only one who lasted. “It was kinda nervewracking, but he and I developed a great respect for each other and he was wonderful,” Youree said.

He said Speyer gave \$100,000 for all of Kline’s equipment and the company. He got a 10-year lease on the building. Youree said Speyer’s father and sister were working for him.

“It’s uncommon to have the motivation Mr. Speyer had. He had a very inquisitive mind. He went to all sorts of seminars, and driving back and forth from Nashville he had books on

tape. He kept improving himself,” Youree said.

It was tough in the early years, Youree said.

“We weren’t making any money and trying to get our volume up. We knew volume was what we had to have. He (Speyer) just stayed with it and he wouldn’t take no for an answer.”

Once Tennsco automated some of its processes with mechanical slitters, shearers and roll formers “then it got competitive.”

Speyer bought more production buildings (the total is now six) and expanded all of them, adding hundreds of employees over the years. Youree grew with the company. He started out as the bookkeeper and retired as the executive vice president, second in command to Speyer. He retired in 1996 after 34 years.

Youree’s greatest joy was to be a part of a struggling, money-losing company that grew into the most successful company in town.

COMING NEXT ISSUE: The factors that led to Tennsco’s success over the last 50 years.

Memorial Service

Tennsco President Stuart Speyer has invited employees, friends and family members to join him at a memorial service to celebrate the life of his late father, Les Speyer.

Two public memorials have been announced - one in Dickson at 1 p.m. Sunday, June 24, at the Tennsco Community Center and a second in Nashville at 7 p.m. that same day at Hillwood Country Club.

Extreme couponing defined

Extreme couponing is an activity that combines shopping skills with couponing in an attempt to save as much money as possible while accumulating the most groceries. The concept of “extreme couponers” was first mentioned by *The Wall Street Journal* on March 8, 2010, in an article entitled “Hard Times Turn Coupon Clipping Into the Newest Extreme Sport”. On March 25, 2010, *ABC Nightline* followed up with its Season 3 premiere with a segment entitled “Extreme Couponing Competition: How Far Can \$50 Go?”

TLC’s *Extreme Couponing* is a show about shoppers who make extensive and focused use of coupons to save money while accumulating large quantities of goods. It was previewed in December 2010; after surpassing network expectations with more than 2 million viewers, it received a series order and began regular airings in April 2011

- From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 4.27.12



Pat Law poses with some of goods she's bought inexpensively with coupons

Coupon Queen

Pat Law saves money, donates to area charities with savings

Enter “extreme couponing” into an internet search field and it yields 11.8 million results in just seconds.

Talk to Pat Law, and she will tell you how she’s saved hundreds of dollars over just a few short months.

Web sites, cable shows, blogs and YouTube videos touting the benefits of extreme couponing clog the virtual highway.

All that’s clogged at Law’s house is her coupon binder and a couple of storage cabinets.

Law, who runs Tensco’s print shop, accepts coupons from co-workers and spends most every lunch hour sorting, cutting and filing in her three-ring binder of baseball card holder sheets. She watches store advertisements for sales, buy-one-get-one-free offers and other deals and many times purchases at one store that offers to match ads from other stores.

In the five to six months she’s been couponing, Law has stocked her house with enough dishwasher detergent, laundry detergent (“I haven’t bought detergent in eight months!” she said), paper towels, body wash, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and plenty of other

household and personal items that she wouldn’t have to go to the store for a year or more.

A big part of Law’s efforts go to stock donation boxes with items that she got very cheaply or free. She regularly donates boxes of food and personal items to the Dickson County Help Center, the Humane Society of Dickson County and the no-kill animal shelter in Williamson County.

“I stock up on non-perishable stuff for us. I also have extra things. When it costs me literally nothing, I put it in a box and donate it,” Law said. She’s giving a box of goods to the Help Center every one to three months. Recently, she donated 10 bags of dog food and several cat treats to the animal shelter. “At least I know they’re fed,” she said.

“There’s deodorant. I put them in my box. What I get free I throw in a box. Feminine products...89 cents a box...I use a coupon for \$1.25 (she got them free with even the tax paid). I donated more than 60 boxes of feminine pads to the Help Center,” she said. “I can’t give a lot out of my paycheck. I can give back something that cost me a little tax. It makes me feel good about it

because I feel like I'm doing the right thing."

A friend got Law started with couponing, and "I always watched it on TV – *Extreme Couponing*," she said.

"My friend did it. I started when I found out the bargains she got. So now I have everyone here at work save their coupons out of Friday and Sunday papers.

"They laugh at me," she said. "At lunchtime, I'll put all the coupons together. Then clip them. I have a huge binder."

Law kept emphasizing: "It's a lot of work. A lot of work, but it's fun. It really is. Now I do the couponing part. He (husband Perry) does much of the going-to-the-store part."

Later she admitted she does some of the shopping. She's even in a giving mode at the store. She always carries a roll of tape and scissors with her. If she has a coupon about to expire, she tapes it to the product on the shelf leaving it behind for others to use.

The mother and grandmother said "in this day and time, you have to do everything you can to save."

Many people don't understand, Law said, that you can get an advertisement from Publix, take it to Wal-Mart, and Wal-Mart will match the offer.

"It's a long process. It's hard when you start, but once you get a system going it pays off at the end."

She doesn't make the donations for the tax break. "I'm doing it because it's the right thing to do," and if she can get something for free and the Help Center use it that's all the better.

"It's really neat when you can do something to save money and you can help others at the same time. It's a good feeling."

"Why not give back? A lot of people really need those items. It's really fun. It makes you



The color-coded, tabbed coupon binder



Monday lunchtime ritual: sorting coupons brought in by co-workers

feel good that you can take care of your family and other families.

Law focuses on two internet sites: www.southernsavers.com (which gives her a heads up about what coupon inserts will be in the Sunday *Tennessean*) and www.krazycouponlady.com. At home each day, she spends about 45 minutes of early morning quiet time scouring these two sites and emails she receives from stores. She watches sale papers. Sometimes she coupons at night after work. "You can do it in the middle of the night at 3 a.m. when you can't sleep. You're not making noise. You're doing something productive."

When she or her husband shops, they take the three-ring binder to the grocery. The baseball card sheets are color coded and categorized.

In addition to coupons, the binder contains each store's policy on coupons and special deals. At the store, you have to be good at picking the person to check you out. "You can tell whether this is a good person. Others just look at you like: can you hurry up and get through my line?" Law said.

Law's biggest single deal?

Cases of Scott paper towels are usually \$7.99 an eight-pack, she said. They were on sale for \$4.99 at store #1, then store #2 had them for \$3.99. Store #1 matched the lower price and Law had a dollar off coupon. She had multiple coupons so she was able to make multiple purchases.

Pat Law's Top 5 Couponing Tips

"Start small and work up. It takes time and patience, but the reward is so great."

- 1. Always be organized**
- 2. Get coupons from your local paper, family and friends and online.**
- 3. Check all ads and compare prices,**
- 4. Make your shopping list and have your coupons matched up with your products.**
- 5. Check online sites for extra savings like thekrazycouponlady.com, and southernsavers.com.**

Employees get rewards

The following employees received an extra \$75 attendance bonus.

1st Quarter

Plant 1

Gary Cable
Larry Costa
James Cotton
Bobby Griffin
Ricky Parchment
Jimmie Ross
Noah Weatherford

Plant 2

Crystal Boone
Sandra Cotton
Johnny Halliburton
Mark Jackson
Albert Primm

Plant 3

Shannon Donegan

Plant 5

Richard Atkinson
Kenneth Greene
David Jones
Frank Joseph

Plant 6

Wesley Cochran

Families celebrate births

Rylie Ralyn Cochran
Born 4-24-12
6 lb 14 oz
Daughter of Wesley and Jessica Cochran



NEW EMPLOYEES ■ Tennsco's Tool and Die department said goodbye to Gerald Wayne Lomax in March. Lomax retired after 14 years with the company. Pictured (above, L to R) are Charlie Warfield, Lomax and Bob Brake.

January - June 2012

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES ■ This listing of employee anniversaries includes those celebrating a five-year interval.

PLANT	NAME	MONTH	NO. OF YRS
1	Bobby Griffin	6/82	30
2	Albert Martin	3/07	5
2	Steven Wright	3/07	5
2	Robert Haynes	3/07	5
2	Matthew Ryniker Green	4/07	5
2	Adam Sullivan	5/07	5
2	Natalie Boone	6/07	5
2	Jeffrey Bell	6/07	5
2	Michael Diviney	4/02	10
2	Robin Slaughter	5/02	10
2	Samuel Lovelday	1/97	15

PLANT	NAME	MONTH	NO. OF YRS
2	Michael Russell	1/97	15
2	Gregory Tummins	3/97	15
2	Frank Mims	4/97	15
2	Dwight Smith	6/92	20
2	Donald Dugan	4/87	25
2	Dennie Boren	3/82	30
2	Anthony Byrum	5/77	35
3	Ivan Turner	6/02	10
4	Thomas Buttrey	1/92	20
5	Mike Baumgarten	6/02	10
5	Kenneth Greene	1/87	25
Office	Brooks Franceschini	5/02	10
Office	Michael Easley	2/97	15
Office	Michael Chapman	1/92	20
Office	David Kelley	1/92	20

Guatemalan children earn education with Tennsco scholarships

Tennsco's charitable giving has built sports facilities in Dickson and Nashville, supported local high schoolers' college endeavors, boosted the United Way with fundraising and libraries with donated shelving.

When Tennsco leaders learned through a local Rotary club presentation that students in Guatemala were having to give up their education after the sixth grade, Tennsco stepped in to help beyond the nation's borders.

High Noon Rotary Past President Jim Sowell has been a part of Volunteers in Mission trips to Guatemala since 2001. Mission teams have built churches, schools and clinics, given away eyeglasses and helped bring fresh water to communities among other things. "Each year, it seems we find other things to do," he said.

Four to five years ago, Sowell said the mission team discovered that the first six grades of school were mandatory for Guatemalan children. After that, "they go to school if they want to and if they can," Sowell said.

"It's a little more expensive to go to what we would call junior high school – grades 7, 8 and 9 – but what they call secondary school. They have to provide their own transportation," Sowell said. If they don't stay enrolled in school, the boys go to work in the sugar cane fields, which the Rotarian called "hot, hard, low-paying work."

The girls? "Not long after finishing the sixth grade they get pregnant. It's a dismal future," Sowell said. "A little bit of education means a whole lot to them."

Sowell reported on his most recent mission at a recent Rotary meeting attended by several Tennsco employees. Sowell had visited the la Toma community near the city of Mazatenango in the department or state of Suchitepéquez in Guatemala.

The next day a Tennsco representative called and offered to put \$2,000 into a scholarship program. Tennsco's donation will fund four students at \$435 each. Tennsco's donation was joined with other local area donations to fund about 70 total students. The local initiative is part of a greater effort involving groups all over the country

Sowell said the students must apply for the scholarship and a member of the local mission team interviews and chooses the recipients.

The money buys uniforms, books and supplies, pays for a public bus to and from school and provides some family assistance because these children would otherwise be working.

"We're seeing some good results," after about five years with the program, Sowell said. "We have some to fall out for different reasons, but a large percentage of them - 85 to 90 percent - go on and finish the ninth grade. They can go on to grades 10, 11 and 12 but they call that college." Above the college level it's called university.

Sowell thanked Tennsco for its support.

"Meeting these kids is a real blessing. It's really good," Sowell said. "Occasionally, we're able to visit in their homes. Some of the homes are cardboard shacks with dirt floors. There's plenty of needs."



NEW EMPLOYEES ■ Tennsco has welcomed back a former employee: Sandra Vineyard (pictured above, left). Vineyard rejoined the Customer Service staff. She had previously worked for Tennsco from 1996 to 2004. Steven Moran (above right) started on Plant 5's paint line in 2002. Now he's moved into the main office's engineering department to work on the Estey division.

Wellness fair challenge

With the Spring wellness fair, Tennsco put a challenge before its employees: between April 1 and Oct. 31, improve your Body Mass Index (BMI) and win some prizes. The goal is to encourage all employees and employee spouses who are on the Tennsco health insurance plan to move toward a healthy BMI range of 19 to 24.

Vice President for Human Resources Phil Corbin said the program was designed with families' "overall health and well-being in mind."

Participants must attend both the spring and fall wellness fairs to get an accurate BMI reading.

All BMI information will be kept confidential. Those who meet their challenge goal will receive a \$50 gift card from Hibbett's and be entered into a grand prize drawing for a bicycle, a one-year gym membership or a treadmill.

A total of 356 employees and spouses attended the Spring wellness fair. Of those, 80 signed up for the healthy BMI challenge. Pictured (from top, clockwise) are Megan Rainey as she weighs in with the Dickson Medical Associates staff; Jeff Bell sits still for a blood pressure check; Kim Morris gets a grip and checks her strength; Terry Dreaden and Derrick Weaver waiting to talk to the doctor.



The Details

Below 19 BMI
gain to a healthy range (19-24)

BMI 19-24
Maintain weight (3 lb. fluctuation allowed)

BMI 25
Lose 1 point of BMI

BMI 26-30
Lose 2 points of BMI

BMI 31 or greater
Lose 3 points of BMI



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