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Economic Development

Celebrating 16 Years in Business!

SPOTLIGHTING MANUFACTURERS AND MAKERS IN
CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES



The Cat's Out of the Bag!

S&K Packaging of East Dubuque, Illinois, is a company that is literally a “mixed bag.” As one of the tri-state area’s leading supplier of high quality bag type packaging for a wide range of industries, S&K “has it in the bag” in every sense of the phrase. The mixed bag includes a plethora of high quality, bulk bags, woven-polypropylene based packages and silage plastics they provide to customers in industries such as dairy and beef farming, animal feed and food ingredient manufacturers, landscape material supplies, industrial factories and foundries and much more.

The company had humble family beginnings with Shawn Stackis collaborating with his grandfather, Harold Koppes, in early 2000. The two were reconditioning used Flexible Intermediate Bulk Container (FIBC) - industrial size bulk bags made from flexible fabric. These bags in particular are designed to store



Shawn Stackis, owner of S&K Packaging, proudly displays one of his products and the company's ability to even print on the multitude of bags the company sells during a site visit by members of the Jo Daviess County Board.

and transport, dry, flowable materials like powders, granules and fertilizers.

The business took off and they successfully incorporated in 2005.

And while the two started out in a small space in northern Dubuque, Iowa, they relocated a few times and then progressively out grew those locations. With each move they made they were quickly able to expand their product offerings, adding multiple woven polypropylene-based products and multi-wall paper bags, as well as customizing printing on them. But in a short time that once again meant the search for a bigger location.

In 2015 they moved across the Mississippi River to a spacious property right off US Highway 20 West to 120 N. Fretress Lake Road in East Dubuque, Illinois.

“There just wasn’t any locations in Dubuque that was feasible or avail-

able for our operation at that point,” Shawn explained.

Once in East Dubuque S&K continued to offer products with improved efficiency, but phasing out the now low demand FIBC products in 2022 and turning to other more demandable products such as silage plastics and laminated bags.

In 2024 they broke ground for a 6,000 square foot addition to their existing building that would give them eight offices in an upper level and an

additional production and storage floor of 3,000 square feet. With an additional warehouse located in Monticello, Iowa, S&K is also able to store and deliver purchases for customers that want to buy in bulk for better pricing.

S&K not only focuses on the sale of their product, according to Shawn, but they also focus on exceptional, individualized customer service.

“We do not have an automated phone system,” Shawn says. “Any call that comes into S&K is answered by a team member who are all very well versed in using creativity and product knowledge to meet a customer’s needs. Even if we don’t have a certain product, it doesn’t mean they can’t get it or create it for you.”

That particular “team” includes a sales and office staff of nine people. However, Shawn noted that with the growth they are experiencing and the recent new printing equipment they





have purchased in January of 2025, that number will grow to an additional five production and labor jobs.

Currently 3-4 sales people are actually out in the field making connections with customers in need of their products. While the sales territory is across the US, the bulk of their distribution is in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, North and South Dakota and Minnesota, with over 360 customers to date,

According to Shawn, all their prod-

ucts are imported from China and India since they can produce it much cheaper than in the United States. As a result, Shawn says they can offer a customer a much better price.

"I'm just a distributor," said Shawn. "However, with our printing equipment on this end S&K can not only customize the bags with company logos and verbaige on both sides of the bags in up to three colors, but they can also store and ship their products as needed." For customers and the competition, Shawn said this can often be a deal breaker.

Before they purchased their two new



additional printing machinery they were able to print 9,000 bags a day. With the new machinery in place, they will be producing 30,000 per day and securing even more continued growth.

But success does come with a price - with literally a million-dollar price tag on those machines and the equipment needed to move the bulk products around the production floor and to off-site storage warehouses. Thanks to a revolving loan award from Jo Daviess County for \$25,000 and a B204 loan from Dairyland Power Cooperative and JCE Co-op for \$100,000, S&K has some real skin in the game and demonstrating an even bigger commitment to Northwest Illinois. They are also pursuing tax credit savings options through organizations tied to local job creation and retention resulting from their business expansion.

As S&K moves forward, Shawn says so will their diversification in their product lines. It also means the continuation of supplying quality product in terms of durability and style and a customer service staff that not only offers viable solutions to a customers needs, but vision in meeting those expectations.

Contact Details

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S&K Packaging received a loan from Dairyland Power Cooperative and JCE Co-op in an effort to support the company's growing success. Awarding the loan is (from left to right) Ian Cochran, Economic Development Manager, Dairyland Power; Shawn Stackis, S&K Owner; Mike Casper, President and CEO, JCE Co-op; and David Schmit, Regional Director, Northwest Illinois Economic Development.