

Q&A

Consumers  
Want More  
Bang for Their  
Buck, says  
Alan Yiu.



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# OR DAILY

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## LaCrosse Footwear Embraces Oregon's Markets

Joe Schneider, the chief executive officer of LaCrosse Footwear, joined the company when it was still known as Danner Boots. In 1985, he got his start in the sales department of the company and was promoted to CEO in 2000. LaCrosse Footwear is headquartered in Portland, Oregon, where it also operates a manufacturing and distribution facility. LaCrosse Footwear makes a variety of high-end footwear products and gear with a focus on the needs of its customers.



Joe Schneider

### How did LaCrosse Footwear come to be?

The original name of the company was Danner Boots before LaCrosse Footwear purchased it in 1994. Danner Boots started in Wisconsin in 1932. Two years later, the Danner family moved the company to Portland.

### What brought Danner to Portland?

During those early years, Danner Boots targeted some of the toughest working environments imaginable as markets with great potential for specialized boots and footwear. The owners saw huge potential for growth in the Portland area because of the Northwest logging boom.

### What sets your company apart from the others?

Over the years, we have learned to focus on understanding what the end user needs from our products. In 2000, we decided

to focus more on the outdoor and work footwear markets in several very niche segments, including boots for military, coal miners, timber workers and law enforcement. By deeply understanding what each group needs from a pair of boots, we are able to create a high-end, durable, functional product.

### So why Portland now?

As many know, Portland has become the footwear capital of the world. There are so many fantastic national brands like Nike, Adidas, Columbia Sportswear and more that have at one point or another called Portland home. From this has grown amazing resources that benefit a business like LaCrosse Footwear. The city offers a highly skilled labor pool, extremely creative designers and a highly organized local infrastructure. As such, LaCrosse moved its headquarters to Portland in 2001.

### Do you still manufacture goods in the United States?

Yes, we still manufacture many of our specialty products at our separate manufacturing facility here in Portland. Our customers have very high expectations from our products, so ensuring we have an extremely talented work force that is able to produce our gear is of great importance.

### Any plans for expansion?

We have seen major growth over the last several years. From 2006 to January 2009, we have added roughly 100 jobs to the local economy. In addition, we will open a new East Coast distribution center in May.