

Growing jobs, manufacturing in Gwinnett

When *GEORGIA Magazine* first wrote about Torey Rose and YSS Athletics [see “A productive state,” November 2011, page 22; *bit.ly/2011gaproducts*], the company she founded 35 years ago to make athletic uniforms for young sports enthusiasts filled 8,000 square feet to overflowing. She had 30 employees and said plainly, “We need more room.”

Today YSS Athletics occupies 16,000 square feet in Snellville in a former shopping center-turned-business center that once held a Sears Roebuck and a Tuesday Morning. And Rose has dibs on an additional 11,000 square feet nearby. Within its walls, the business has room to grow, and the brightly lit environment also is a lot quieter than its previous location.

Originally, work for YSS was highly seasonal, Rose recalls. When the season was finished, Rose would have to rotate some employees off

line, a situation that eventually became untenable as they would often find permanent jobs elsewhere and no longer be available.

“Now, we don’t have a slow season,” Rose says. YSS is focusing on growing jobs and has hired a new graphic artist. The business now operates at full tilt year-round.

She accomplished this by reaching out to independent sporting goods stores and creating all types of sporting apparel. In 2012, Rose identified the first such store and increased its bottom line by 35 percent while also enhancing her company’s.

YSS uses only U.S.-milled goods—all knit, rather than woven—and Rose’s ability to design in-house and customize garments lets her clients create their own brands and makes them more competitive. She also now makes apparel for big brands, such as Giordana’s cycling jerseys.



David Miller prints patterns on fabric at YSS Athletics in Snellville.

In 2015, the Georgia Department of Economic Development named YSS Athletics as an honorable mention in its Small Business Rock Star contest.

Keeping it in the family, all four of Rose’s daughters work in the shop. Plus she works with organizations to hire and train legal immigrants.

“We have a more diverse culture here than we had,” she says. “And our company parties are fun.”

For more info about YSS Athletics, visit yssathletics.com.

—Jane F. Garvey

Georgians showcase top food products at Flavor of Georgia

The 10th annual Flavor of Georgia food product contest is set for March 14-15 at the Georgia Railroad Freight Depot in Atlanta. The contest showcases innovative, market-ready prototypes or commercially available food products. Finalists have benefited from greater exposure, publicity, business contacts and sales. More than 1,000 products have been entered since the contest began in 2007.

The contest is hosted annually by the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, with support from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Center for Innovation for Agribusiness, Walton Electric Membership Corp. and the Georgia Agribusiness Council.

For more information on the contest, visit flavorofga.com.

—Gale Cutler

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