

STORM & SECURITY

P R O T E C T I O N

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When, Not If

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Private and government collaboration can be a good thing

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Initiatives At Work

An example of how private and governmental efforts can be good for everyone.

When a community, a business and local government work together, good things can happen.

Earlier this year, Expert Shutter Services/ESS Mfg., Port St. Lucie, FL, announced plans to build a new facility. In fact, the company is projecting to double in size within five years bringing new jobs to St. Lucie County. The announcement was the culmination of some 30 years of ESS Mfg. working in the Port St. Lucie community designing, manufacturing, installing, servicing and repairing hurricane and security shutters and support from the city of Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie County and the St. Lucie Economic Development Council.

Homegrown Business

ESS Mfg.'s expansion strategy includes building a new 24,800-square-foot manufacturing facility on a 2.3-acre industrial property in Port St. Lucie. Local companies, including civil engineers, architects, contractors and builders, are being used for the construction of the new facility.

Expert Shutter Services/ESS Mfg. is family owned and is operated by area residents Michael and Jamie Heissenberg and their three children, Michael, Christopher and Christina. The company has been in business for nearly three decades and holds several U.S. and international patents for its designs. Its customers include residential, commercial and high-rise property owners.

Of the 40 employees currently working at ESS Mfg. about 95 percent of them have residences and families in Port St. Lucie. "We are thrilled by the show of support from the county and the city of Port St. Lucie as we expand our business and open our doors to new employees," said Michael Heissenberg. "Within the next 12 months, we expect to hire 10 new, full-time employees from the Port St. Lucie area. We are proud to help build the economy of the city we love."



Christopher, left, and Michael Heissenberg display a rendering of the company's planned 24,800-square-foot new facility.

Working Together

ESS Mfg.'s expansion plans came to the attention of the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC). EDC is a private, non-profit organization that works to attract, retain and expand businesses in the community and partners with local governments and the private sector to achieve those goals. In addition, the St. Lucie County Commission offers a tax abatement program and Job Growth Incentive Grants (JGIG) to recruit new businesses and to help expand those already in the area. The grants are offered to qualifying locally owned small businesses in the county. In March, the Board of County Commissioners awarded a JGIG to ESS Mfg. to help with its expansion.

"Awarding this grant to this homegrown business with a 30-year history in our community is the perfect example of our incentives at work. A local company is being assisted in its expansion and verifiable jobs will be created," said Paula Lewis who chairs the St. Lucie County Commission.

"A diversified, growing economy is essential to a prosperous Port St. Lucie and Treasure Coast, and helping to grow our local businesses should be the central thrust of our economic development efforts," said Mayor Greg Oravec. "It is encouraging to see the city and county working together with our economic development partner, the St. Lucie EDC, to help an existing local business such as Expert Shutter Services/ESS Mfg. to expand its operations."



Family owned Expert Shutter Services/ESS Mfg. has been operated by the Heissenberg family for nearly 30 years in Port St. Lucie, FL,