



Eric Lane: New Career, Same Community Involvement

By Candace Gwaltney

Since Eric Lane, president and owner of Basiloid Diversified Products, moved to Daviess County about eight years ago he's changed career tracks, bought a business, served as president of the community foundation and supported many other community efforts. Originally from the Vincennes area, Lane and his family discovered Washington and the surrounding area as an accepting place where it's easy to get involved. Lane is currently active with the Daviess County Economic Development Corp. and will serve as chairman. He also completed a six-year term on the Daviess County Community Foundation. Outside of business dealings, Daviess County residents may know Lane from his volunteer work with youth sports groups and his church.

"I've always been a believer that if you think something is worthwhile and you want to be a part of it, you need to be a part of it," he says.

BizVoice®: Tell us about your history with Basiloid (the company and its 20 employees are located in Elnora in the northern part of Daviess County).

Eric Lane: "I purchased the company November 2 of 2006. Prior to that, I'd been involved in banking for probably 17 years with Old National Bank and its affiliates. (I) had the itch to become an entrepreneur and this (Basiloid), as it turns out, became available and works out pretty well for us."

BV: Describe Basiloid and what's next for the company.

EL: "Basiloid was founded 56 years ago now. It was founded by two brothers – Basil and Lloyd Hobson. One of their first ventures was to hook up with General Electric, and they designed a unit to handle some of the packages that they had. GE was our first customer and we are proud to say that they continue to remain one of our customers. From there it has been a strictly material handling industry."

Customers include appliance businesses (to handle refrigerators, freezers, washers and dryers) and the heating and cooling industry, he adds.

"What we are trying to do now and we have recently got some relationships going with the military at Crane, and are doing some military work for them, is trying to expand the horizons a little bit (for) the general business."

BV: Explain Basiloid's product and how it works.



Basiloid Products lifts pick up freight from the lid instead of using a pallet, which helps reduce damage. The lifts are manufactured and damaged ones (left) are repaired in the Elnora facility.

EL: “It is pallet-less so you do not have to have pallets for the product itself. It is a damage reduction tool. Damage is very high in some of these warehouses so our units help contain that. It also increases warehouse utilization and capacity by the way you are able to stack this. Our unit lifts the product from the lid of a cap, and we’ll carry anywhere between one and six units, and in fact, some of them eight units at a time. Just a very niche type of industry.”

BV: I read Basiloid is looking to expand into international markets.

EL: “Yes, we are. We have quite a few customers in Canada. We have a number in Mexico. Production of appliances and heating and air units is kind of moving overseas based on the cost of production, labor and materials. So, we’re trying to establish some relationships internationally as well so they can make those products and handle them in their original country prior to being shipped to the U.S.”

BV: Through your involvement with the Daviess County Economic Development Corp., what is most important to continuing economic development in the county?

EL: “Expanding our business base is really number one. How we go



Eric Lane uses a map to track customers across North America. He is looking to expand sales into international markets.

about that is basically twofold. It’s either providing opportunities and assistance to existing businesses in the area which we think have the greatest potential, or you bring new businesses to town. We are actively trying to do both of those.

“We hope that by expanding the tech park (WestGate @ Crane) that we’ve been working on that that will bring not only business but it will bring residents to Daviess County, which will increase our tax base overall.”

BV: What is the most rewarding experience from your involvement in economic development efforts?

EL: “Probably the most rewarding is when you get to meet new people that come to town. Either you go to church with them or you sit next to them at a basketball game or help them with coaching a baseball game.

“But seeing the personal effect that comes with the professional effect is probably the most exciting to me.”

BV: As a business and community leader, what about Daviess County makes you most proud?

EL: “The thing that gives me the most pride is the willingness to work together. The willingness to put your egos aside when we are talking about any activity, whether it be providing assistance on financing with someone or helping out another business that may be a competitor of yours. We tend, as a community, to put our egos aside and do what’s best for the county. That’s just not something that you see very often. Normally there’s a ‘what’s in it for me’ aspect and we don’t seem to have that.”

BV: How would you describe your leadership style?

EL: “I’m not very autocratic. I like to be involved, but I like people to take ownership of whatever project they’re on – whether it (is) in this business and my employees here or in various organizations I’ve been involved with. I try to encourage people to take responsibility for their areas of expertise and their areas of responsibility.”

BV: What book would we find on your nightstand right now?

EL: “Tony Dungy’s new book ‘Quiet Strength.’ I enjoy that one very much. You’ll find that one and my Bible.”

He adds with a laugh: “And then in my bathroom you’ll find Sports Illustrated.”

INFORMATION LINK

Resource: Eric Lane, Basiloid Diversified Products, at www.basiloid.com