

# HOMEGROWN BUSINESSES

By Michelle Kodis

## Local Merchants Go Beyond The Perimeters Of Telluride's Box Canyon

### HORNY TOAD ACTIVEWEAR

Mike Secor and Gordon Seabury

Horny Toad Activewear has had no trouble winning the attention of people in and out of Telluride. This growing clothing company, which began in founder Jessica Nordhaus' garage, is now on the national scene, and new owners Mike Secor and Gordon Seabury have no intention of slowing down.

The company's unusual name may have something to do with its popularity. However, the quality of clothing fabricated in its Telluride and Chicago production houses speaks to the real reason people are demanding Horny Toad outerwear: precise workmanship and top-of-the-line fabrics.

Mike Secor, Horny Toad's co-owner since April 1995, has led the way with the expansion to the national business scene. The company's latest coup is the inclusion of two Horny Toad hats in the upscale Smith and Hawken catalog. And, Horny Toad was hired by a national mountain bike manufacturer to design a vest for its professional team. Horny Toad's first catalog debuted in September and includes color cards that customers can use to create individual clothing color schemes. Customers can also request fabric swatches to help them with their orders.

Horny Toad's clothing line is a study in the variations possible when working with fleece fabrics. Here, fleece takes the form of vests, hats, jackets, pullovers, pants, headbands, and even pillows and blankets. This innovative

and energetic young company plans to expand its clothing line and is currently experimenting with new fabrics and designs.

"No matter how large the company gets, we'll never compromise quality," Secor says. "When you buy from Horny Toad, you are getting the best quality fleece garment found anywhere."

### SUNDANCE SOLAR

Kerry Kalarney

A funny thing happened while this interview with solar power expert Kerry Kalarney was taking place: The electricity went out, taking my portable phone and computer with it.

Kalarney, who owns and operates Sundance Solar out of his home on Hastings Mesa, was amused, and reminded me with a laugh that when you've got the sun, you never have to worry about a power outage.

Point well taken. In fact, Kalarney's entire home is powered by the sun, including his fully equipped office and cabinet shop and well pump.

In operation for six years, Sundance Solar specializes in designing and building solar custom homes and power systems.

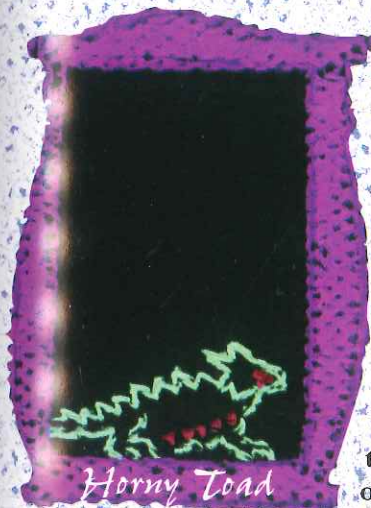
Kalarney has been working with solar for more than 12 years. What drives him, he says, is his desire to get more and more homeowners off the grid—or, essentially, free from electric power and the ensuing monthly electric bills.

Kalarney works with clients to determine their individual energy needs and then designs a

solar system to meet those needs. While he says the up front cost of solar power might seem high to the uninitiated, the long-term savings are well-worth the investment.







*Horny Toad*

In addition to his work in Telluride, Kalarney is involved in projects throughout Colorado and in Japan and Honduras. The Japanese project involves building commercial photovoltaic systems for a construction company that wants to free its building from the electrical grid. In Honduras, Kalarney is consulting with several resorts that are considering off-grid options. He is also working on a plan to install photo-

voltatics at the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico, and has received solar equipment requests from as far away as the Dutch West Indies.

"There's growing interest in solar all over the world, he says. People are beginning to see the ludicrousness of constantly burning nonrenewable resources. I describe solar as power in perpetuity. It's a reliable power source, and one that is much better for the environment."

### JAGGED EDGE MOUNTAIN GEAR

*Margaret and Paula Quenemoen*

Margaret and Paula Quenemoen's mountain clothing company, Jagged Edge Mountain Gear, owes its colorful name to the peaks surrounding Telluride.

"The name is inspired by the San Juan Mountains," Margaret says, "I remember looking up at them and saying, 'Now that is a jagged edge.' As soon as I said those words, I'd realized I found a great name for my company."

Margaret started Jagged Edge Mountain Gear in 1990. She began working on outdoor clothing designs while living in Boulder, and moved soon after to Telluride, where she found herself destitute, with no money to even put gas in her tank. She needed a quick way to earn cash, so she sat down and sewed 13 headbands, which she then took to restaurants, attempting to sell them to patrons. She sold every last one, and people wanted more.

Today, the Quenemoen's business is booming. They have retail clients in Alaska, New Hampshire and Japan and recently moved to a larger store in town. In fact, their growing company has been housed in four different



*Jagged Edge*

locations in just one-and-a-half years, beginning with 150 square feet and graduating to the current 750 square feet of retail space in which they display innovative fleece jackets, vests and numerous other designs.

Margaret's background in clothing design dates back to her climbing and mountaineering days, when she sewed her own gear. People started asking her where she had purchased her clothing, and Quenemoen soon realized she had the makings of a business. She worked for other outdoor clothing manufacturers as a pattern designer, gaining valuable experience in the clothing industry. Then, she forged ahead with Jagged Edge Mountain Gear, focusing on making clothing durable enough to tough out rugged outdoor sports while at the same time being fashionable enough to wear to the office or to dinner.

The Quenemoen's clothing line is in a constant state of evolution. Each season's line is an improvement of the last, with additional items integrated into the collection. This winter, look for her popular fleece vest in ink blue, bayberry green, eggplant purple and black - irresistible colors for Quenemoen's equally irresistible clothing.



*Sundance Solar*

### KENDRA'S KITCHEN

*Kendra Wilcox*

Kendra's Kitchen Creative Foods is the perfect name for caterer Kendra Wilcox's company: Creativity plays a big part in her business, and she always tries to infuse her foods with artfulness and pizzazz.

"Cooking is like painting a picture," Wilcox says. "You are bringing lots of different flavors together, in the process enhancing the individual flavors as you go. It can be compared to an artist working with an easel of colors."

Growing up in a gourmet-food oriented family, Wilcox experienced at a young age the pleasures of high-quality food. She also learned to appreciate the benefits of eating organically, and acquired from her cardiopulmonary surgeon father an awareness of Eastern health practices.



A Tucson native who lived in England for two years and attended boarding school in Virginia, Wilcox started her own pizza business as a high school student and, in college, cooked for families.

Maintaining her belief that healthy eating is the way to a healthy body, Wilcox moved to Telluride in August 1987 and began cooking in hunting camps. She was fashion designer Ralph Lauren's personal chef at his spacious ranch in Ridgway, Colorado, for more than four years, and then decided to make catering her full-time occupation. Since then, her business has boomed, with clients calling from Telluride and beyond. She bottles her own seasoning spice, "Southwest Seasoning from Kendra's Kitchen," and continues to travel the world researching different cuisines and cooking techniques.

Not content to rest with her current level of success, Wilcox plans to expand her catering business into the food manufacturing market, and began working on the project in Salt Lake City this fall. She intends to market her foods and spices under the apt slogan, "Healthy food for the happy family." As always, she will emphasize high-quality, wholesome foods prepared with style, innovation and flair. She plans to split her time between Telluride and Salt Lake City, returning to the San Juan Mountains to rejuvenate and manage the catering end of the business. Of course, all work makes Jane a dull girl, so Wilcox builds in plenty of down time. When not at the stove, she can be found with her other true love: Horses.

At the young age of 31, Wilcox is poised to take her natural talent for cooking to new levels. Her goal: To make Kendra's Kitchen a household name. Judging by Wilcox's commitment to her work, that seems a most reasonable goal.

## BUSH & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Jeff and Kathleen Bush

It's hard to suppress the intensity of Jeff and Kathleen Bush, a trait that must have kept them going when the 10-hour work days stretched into 14-hour work days, day after day after day, year after year.

The founders and owners of Telluride's largest advertising and publishing company, Bush & Associates, Inc., Jeff and Kathleen publish the popular *Telluride and the San Juans*® pocket guide and debuted their latest magazine, *TellurideStyle*®, in the summer of 1995. As their business



grows and they add more employees to their payroll, the Bushs keep this one very important thing in mind: The bottom line is that we always provide an excellent product for our clients. That's our goal, the thing we always remember as we go to work each day," Jeff says.

Jeff and Kathleen started working in the publishing industry in 1985, when they began producing a series of pocket-sized visitor's guides for numerous ski resorts, including Sun Valley, Aspen, Jackson Hole, Vail, Crested Butte, Steamboat and Breckenridge. After several years of working for Pocket Guide Publications (then largest ski publication in the nation) and freelancing from their home, they decided to make it official by having a "public office/presence." Bush & Associates was finally incorporated in January 1991. Since then, the business has skyrocketed. Take *Telluride and the San Juans* as an example: The first issue of the guide, published in the summer of 1991, contained 48 pages. Today, it boasts 116 glossy four-color pages filled with original artwork and stories about Telluride and its unique culture and people.

The latest Bush & Associates publishing venture is the 116-page *TellurideStyle* magazine, now the region's largest 4-color publication. The stylish publication is essentially a revamping of the popular *Telluride In-Room Guest Directory* that now includes articles about the Telluride region. Placed in all but eight rooms in Telluride's short-term rental units, this elegantly hard-bound publication is seen everywhere - between its street presence and unique in-room distribution. *TellurideStyle* is a study in market saturation. Further, *TellurideStyle*'s great success has led to the development of this winter's first *Crested Butte In-Room Guest Directory*®.

Bush & Associates has taken its considerable amount of talent and energy to the regional level, with the second edition of the *Winter Park and Fraser River Valley GuestGuide*. This magazine, fashioned after *Telluride and the San Juans*, was a hit as well, so the Bushs plan to franchise similar publications throughout Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region.

Bush & Associates uses only the latest and best soft/hard-ware. There's no sense in dilly-dallying around with inferior products - go for the best and for being the best is their philosophy.

Will they ever stop?

Unlikely, judging by this husband-and-wife team that likes nothing better than seeing the results of hard work. Next on the agenda - a national magazine. Any interested investors?

