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- \$4 million community investment
- 250 new jobs
- 200 jobs retained

Lane County Funds Oak Patch Gifts' Business Expansion, Job Relocation

By Heather M. Edwards

College buddies Pete Day and Chris Cunningham wanted to do something different, something entrepreneurial.

Pete was tired of office life as an investment banker and Chris was tired of life as a station manager in the frigid Antarctic U.S. Polar Program.

In the comparatively tropical Pacific Northwest they found Jody Coyote--known for its distinctive and handmade jewelry--and one of the Northwest's best undervalued private companies.

They bought Jody Coyote in 2003. The homegrown Saturday Market start-up had 65 employees at the time and a specialized product line not duplicated anywhere in the market.

Within three years later Day and Cunningham formed Oak Patch Gifts, LLC. They have quadrupled the company's revenues, acquired three new gift companies, quadrupled output, and hired an

additional 250 employees.

After securing loans from the City of Eugene, commercial banks, and private investors, they came to Lane County Community & Economic Development for the remaining \$171,000 they needed to move into a new 60,000 square-foot facility in the Greenhill Technology Park.

Their job retention and job growth made them ideal candidates for economic development grant funding.

In January 2007 they expanded into their new business park home.

This \$4 million investment into the community retains 200 entry level jobs, and Oak Patch Gifts now runs manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and retailing from their new facility—it's not just a jewelry company anymore.

Boasting impressive national and international growth and distribution, Oak Patch Gifts is still a locally owned and operated success.