

BLUE WAVE BOATS

By Nels Rodefeld

Customer service and satisfaction are two of the most important measuring sticks in business success. Blue Wave Boats of Checotah gets high marks in both from its customers, a fact reflected by the company's 33 expansions of its production facility in the last decade.

Roger Parks birthed Blue Wave Boats in 1992 with a homemade drawing board in a garage-sized shop, but Blue Wave's story really began years earlier. And that story is one of the entire Parks family.

Roger Parks' father built boats in a small town in Arkansas and even at age 14, Roger was intent on building his own small wooden fishing boat. Roger and his father launched a small custom boat building shop, creating a series of boats known as "The Rebel," "The Confederate" and a boat called "The Sidewinder" for a

BLUE WAVE MOVING TO SEMINOLE

Blue Wave Boats is currently constructing a new, state-of-the-art plant in Seminole that will double both its production capabilities and office space. The new facility, scheduled to open this spring, will be a boon for this town of 7,000 left reeling when the city's largest employer, Wrangler, closed its plant.

"Oklahoma is our choice for manufacturing because of the great location of the state and being able to ship our product in all directions," said Richard Parks. "We're also here because of all of the great experiences you can have in our state and because of our state's friendly city and state governmental policies."

dealer in Oklahoma.

After Roger's father passed away, he and his family moved to Oklahoma intending to open a repair shop. But shortly before arriving in the Sooner State, a handshake deal resulted in the Park's family entering a partnership to start a boat building shop in Checotah - Predator Boats. (Predators are still made by Thomas Marine, and like Blue Waves, are widely used for a variety of big-water fishing.)

Then, in 1992, the Parks began Blue Wave Boats. And it was an all-family affair. Roger built the first Blue Wave 189 Classic with his brother Greg and his two sons, Richard and Steven assisting. His wife Pam set up an office in their mobile home and handled the paperwork to register their design and logo.

That first winter they took their one and only boat to the Houston Boat Show, wondering if they'd even be able to sell it.

They did, and then some. They returned to Checotah with an eight-week order backlog and within a year-and-a-half they employed 18 full-time boat builders. The manufacturing team has grown; they now employ 80 people in a production facility that has grown from a garage-sized shop to the current 80,000 square foot plant.

"What we are most proud of about establishing in Oklahoma is the craftsmen and women that we get the privilege of working side by side with to produce the highest quality product," said Steven Parks.

Blue Wave is now under the leadership of third generation boat builders Richard and Steven Parks, and the company recently added eight new models and a new upholstery division.

"We are very proud that Blue Wave has been recognized by the Oklahoma Venture forum as the 27th fastest growing company in the state," said Steven Parks.



Bluewave boats have earned their reputation as high quality, user friendly boats.