

COVERING THE
DALLAS-FORT WORTH
METROPLEX

Dallas Business Journal

Moving in
— and up

North Texas economic development pros haven't let the soft economy stop them from working to lure new companies to Texas or convince those already here to stay and expand.

SECTION B



Check dallasbusinessjournal.com — Get updates on breaking business news all day long

JUNE 19-25, 2009 | \$4.50

ENTERPRISE ZONE

Dallas
Business
Journal

TWO MINUTES WITH **Wes Goyer** St. Bernard Sports

For those who want to hit the slopes immediately during winter vacation, upscale ski retailer St. Bernard Sports has become a must-stop before heading to Aspen. Co-owner Wes Goyer had this in mind when he started the store more than 30 years ago. Although there were other ski retailers in Dallas, none replicated the quality of a resort store. In 1998, Goyer expanded the business to include shoes and sportswear from brands such as Lacoste, Patagonia, Lilly Pulitzer and Vineyard Vines, which now pull in more sales than winter sports merchandise, especially during the summer. St. Bernard, with stores in Dallas, Plano and Austin, was growing 15% to 19% annually before the recession. Since then, Goyer has focused on keeping the company manageable and improving the store's Web site. Goyer was interviewed by staff writer Phoebe Wu.

Q. What makes St. Bernard Sports different from other ski or sporting goods stores?

A. Our edge or advantage is our fashion. We represent anything from ladies' dress lines to hiking gear. Even in our ski area, we're superior. Dick's Sporting Goods and Sports Authority can't be very broad or have a representation in the winter sports area because it's a small retail pie. We've just been doing it so long, and we've been strong in the fashion side of women's sports. The fact that we're not describable sets us apart; we're a lot of different things. We have great people working at the store, and we give good customer service. We're aggressive.

Q. How has the company been affected by the economic downturn and what are you doing to survive it?

A. We really are not in a growth mode at this point. Sales in sportswear and shoes are flat, which is very manageable. We're just doing a better job of markdowns and sell-throughs and doing so with the same amount of sales. We ended up with too much inventory on the last business cycle. Last year, women quit wearing polos altogether. We got stuck with thousands of dollars' worth of polos. The quick fashion shift doesn't really happen in men's. We've shrunk the company a little bit in expenses. We kind of had a tough ski year this year.

Q. What do you see in the future for St. Bernard?

A. My son's interested in it. He can take the burden off my shoulders. I see growth in the same retail footprint; I'm not going to expand the real estate for awhile. I see an expanded e-commerce effort. We're in the process of a significant upgrade in our software over the next six months in order to be competitive. We're looking to similar businesses in Louisiana and St. Louis that are doing quite well.

