

## **Bob Bunting – Bunting Magnetics**

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Magnets. They are a phenomenon of nature, and the power of their magnetic current can be used in various ways to generate electricity or to pull or repel metal. Today we'll learn about an innovative Kansas company which has found ways to harvest that magnetic power in a remarkable diversity of products which it is marketing around the world. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Bob Bunting is President and owner of Bunting Magnetics in Newton, Kansas. The company was founded by his father, Walter Bunting, in 1959. At that time, the use of magnets in the can handling industry was popular, so the senior Mr. Bunting began his company in Chicago where several can manufacturers were located. He grew the company through the years.

“During the company’s first twenty years, we moved to four different locations (as we grew),” Bob Bunting said. “Then my dad said he wanted to find a location with enough land so that when he needed to expand, he wouldn’t have to move again.”

The company did an extensive search for a new location and in 1979 made its selection, choosing to relocate the company to Newton, Kansas. Newton was much smaller than Chicago but was centrally located on the continent and was served by an interstate highway. The company owns a 101-acre industrial site so it has plenty of room. “Dad got his wish,” Bob Bunting said.

Bob worked his way up through the business and became President of Bunting Magnetics in 1993. The company expanded and diversified over time.

Today the world headquarters of Bunting Magnetics is in Newton along with a manufacturing operation. The company also has facilities in Chicago, Pennsylvania, England, China, and Australia. Wow.

The company has a diverse product line, but its products all relate to one key element: Magnets. “My goal is to solve the world’s problems through the use of magnets,” Bob Bunting said with a smile. While those magnets were originally used in can manufacturing plants in Chicago, Bunting Magnetics engineers developed and designed many new applications through the years.

Now the company’s products can be grouped into seven categories of use: magnets themselves plus flexible dies, material handling, metal detection, printing, plastics, and magnetic separation. In practice, Bunting products might be used on surgical drills for the medical industry, conveyor systems for material handling, pharmaceutical or foil package inspection, magnetic cylinders for printing, and many other ways. For example, Bunting is said to be the “the world leader in producing the best magnetic cylinders.”

A growing application is in food safety. “All of our (nation’s) food begins on a farm, but think about all it goes through to reach the consumer,” Bob said. The raw food is harvested, trucked, stored, shipped and processed, probably with metal equipment. “Our magnetic separator can remove ferrous contamination from the final food product,” he said.

Bunting Magnetics products have literally been sold from coast to coast and around the world, from Europe to South America and the Pacific Rim. The company employs 185 people, most of those at Newton. Such employment is a significant benefit to Newton and surrounding rural communities such as Burns, population 274 people. Now, that’s rural.

What are the keys to the company’s success? “I believe we’ve been successful in understanding our market, where we belong,” Bob said. “I’m proud of the workforce we’ve developed over time,” he said. “We want to hire good people and keep them. We’re committed to the community and we reinvest here.”

Bunting Magnetics is a family business. Bob's son Robert Bunting joined the company six years ago, making him the third generation in the company. "People here like seeing the stability of that," Bob said. The company was recently named Wichita Trade Council Business of the Year and earned the Wichita Business Journal's award as Best in Business 2012.

For more information, go to [www.buntingmagnetics.com](http://www.buntingmagnetics.com).

Magnets. They are a phenomenon of nature which can be applied in many manufacturing applications. We salute Bob Bunting and all the people of Bunting Magnetics for making a difference with their innovative, world-class applications of these products. For me, such success draws me in like a magnet.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.