

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release



US-based textile companies join forces to fill the nation's PPE gap

With the country scrambling to find personal protective equipment, Bolger & O'Hearn, ColorWorks and Merrow Manufacturing, Inc. collaborate to make thousands of units of PPE

(Fall River, Massachusetts, August 4 2020.....) **Faced with a global pandemic and massive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortages in the United States**, three large textile companies -- each strong in its own niche -- banded together quickly this spring to help fill the nation's explosive demand for personal protective equipment (PPE).

The result was a fast response to PPE needs and an ongoing relationship that promises to help the country continue to meet growing demand for PPE across multiple sectors of the economy as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

The collaboration included Merrow Manufacturing, Inc., ColorWorks and Bolger & O'Hearn, Inc.

Merrow Manufacturing is a massive, high-tech cut and sew operation based in Fall River, Mass., typically used by fashion and textile brands to make hard and soft textile goods.

Bolger & O'Hearn, also based in Fall River, provided the high-powered durable water repellents designed to repel oil, water and blood when applied to PPE fabrics, as well as other textile chemistries needed to meet ASTM requirements for Levels 1, 2, and 3 for medical PPE. A [bluesign system partner](#), B&O is also known for developing chemical products based on environmentally-compliant materials and technologies.

ColorWorks, which is located in Elizabethton, Tenn., took charge of the dyeing and finishing of millions of yards of fabric used to make the PPE. ColorWorks was purchased in January (2020) by Ocean State Innovations (OSI), which is based in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

"OSI has a long history working with both Bolger & O'Hearn and Merrow," said Bryan Boulis, president of OSI. "ColorWorks relies heavily on the support of the R&D talent at Bolger. In March of this year I reached out to Charlie Merrow [CEO of Merrow Manufacturing] in regard to his efforts to fill the PPE void both locally [for hospitals in New England] and throughout North America. Charlie presented his

specifications and my team immediately reached out to Bolger & O’Hearn. ColorWorks has used 100 percent Bolger & O’Hearn products on all of the woven products we shipped to Merrow.”

In normal times, Merrow is a large domestic manufacturer of soft goods. Family owned, and in operation since the late 1800’s, Merrow invented the overlock stitch and its manufacturing floors in Fall River are typically humming with the sound of up to 500 sewing machines and a small army of high precision fabric cutters.

Earlier this year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Merrow quickly pivoted and focused their textile cut and sew expertise on meeting New England’s sudden, urgent need for medical isolation gowns. In less than two months, Merrow quickly became one of the largest manufacturers of PPE in North America **and through collaborations with Bolger & O’Hearn and ColorWorks, as well as Dupont, Merrow has, since March, manufactured millions of units of PPE.** Their work has been so critical to the safety of New England residents, that Merrow was recognized by Rhode Island’s governor, Gina Raimondo, in an address to the state this spring.

Bolger & O’Hearn’s R&D group has a long history of working with brands and mills throughout the US textile industry, developing custom chemistries designed to give their customers a competitive edge. Since March at the beginning of the pandemic, much of this work has focused on developing high powered durable water, oil and soil repellents used to manufacture items of PPE that meet Levels 1,2 and 3 requirements for medical PPE.

“Bolger & O’Hearn is proud to be at the forefront of the effort to rebuild the US textile industry’s PPE supply chain, and support brands and mills throughout the US, by developing the chemistries that help them meet our country’s urgent demands for medical gowns, curtains, lab coats and other essential items of medical PPE,” said Kelly Murphy, Co-President of B&O.

“With like-minded people working together, the possibilities of what we can achieve in the face of this pandemic are limitless. The push for personal protective equipment is not going away anytime in the near future.”

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Bolger & O’Hearn

Since its founding in 1969, Bolger and O’Hearn has been selling uniquely efficient and consistently high-quality chemicals. Its personalized service approach has been the pillar of its success. From its traditional beginnings in the textile industry, B&O has expanded into paper coatings, non-wovens and other non-textile manufactured products, all of which find applications in a wide range of industries.

Today its diverse and comprehensive product line – totaling over 2,500 products – is sold and distributed globally. Committed to a zero-carbon future, B&O currently produces its products using renewable energy. The solar voltaic array on its facilities allow it to displace more than 100,000 pounds of carbon each year. B&O is also a bluesign® System Partner. To learn more, go to bolgerohearn.com.

You can learn more about Bolger & O’Hearn at www.bolgerohearn.com

And you can follow Bolger & O’Hearn on Twitter at @BolgerandOHearn

Ocean State Innovations

Founded in 1913 as Brand and Oppenheimer Company, Inc. ("B&O") as a supplier of garment linings, the company celebrates a rich history in the textile industry. In October 2011, Praesidian Capital and StoneCreek Capital, LLC became investors. In 2014 Brand & Oppenheimer acquired Performance Textiles, a US textiles supplier. In 2015 B&O entered into an equity partnership with 1947 LLC’s management team: Ed Ricci, Ben Galpen, and Bryan Boulis, all industry experts with over 100 years of combined experience. The 1947 LLC Management team has grown the business through organic sales, strategic partnerships, and acquisitions. In 2017 B&O acquired the assets of Cutting Edge TexStyles, a global supplier of Bindings, Trims and Piece Goods. In 2018 B&O acquired the assets of General Fabrics Inc., a global designer and wholesale distributor of quilting fabrics. In 2019, Brand and Oppenheimer became Ocean State Innovations (“OSI”) to continue the tradition of quality textiles, while focusing on the company’s innovative industry expertise and strong Rhode Island roots. OSI, based in Portsmouth, RI, has distinguished itself as the premier global source for textile products and services. In 2020, OSI acquired the assets of ColorWorks, a premier textile dyer and finisher located in Elizabethton, Tennessee. Ocean State Innovations continues as a leader in the textile industry for the U.S. Military and is now bringing that same innovative textile expertise to many commercial market segments such as medical, industrial, automotive and traditional apparel.

[Merrow Manufacturing](#)