



Inventive attitude propels Owens Products into a productive future

“Necessity is the mother of invention,” said Owens Products CEO and owner, Gary Kirtley, “and it’s also the core of Owens Products.

Being inventive is how Owens Products was able to become an industry leader in its field and it is how they’ve been able to maintain productivity for nearly 49 years!”

Breaking new ground in 1965 with the invention of the Classic fifth wheel hitch and the Owens fifth wheel recreational trailer, Owens Products literally hit the ground running, or so it would seem. However, its design of the first aluminum running boards in the 1970’s, catapulted them into a league of their own as an industry leader in running board manufacturing.

“Owens products are American made,” Kirtley said, “which is not something most other auto accessory companies can say and, we’ve continued to be innovative. We are excited to be expanding outside of our line of automotive accessories, which now includes fiberglass and aluminum running boards, aluminum tool boxes, garage and trailer accessories and custom made products, into a new line of products in a completely new field– dog boxes!”

Kirtley said that Owens began their foray into the world of dog boxes by creating a simple unit for transport of the family pet and a slightly more complex box for hunting dogs. “The dog boxes were very well-received, especially by the hunting industry,” Kirtley said. “That success then led us to create specialty boxes for police canines.” Kirtley said supplying specialty boxes to law enforcement agencies led them to think even further outside the original dog box idea.

“Working with law enforcement led us to ‘The Canine Kennel Project.’ We are collaborating with some other companies to create a special portable kennel that will meet the needs of the military dog, a valuable, life-saving member of our armed services. The special Canine Kennel system is created so that it can be dropped anywhere in the world then assembled within 30 minutes. It can also be easily disassembled, making it mobile.

“We’ve already got an order for 20 of them,” Kirtley said smiling, “and I really believe, in my heart of hearts, that this is going to be a great thing for us.” Kirtley said there are many applications for the portable Canine Kennel, and they are in the process of exploring them all. “We are thinking it’s really going to take off,” he said, “and we’re happy about being able to create a product that will protect and provide comfort to man’s best friend.

“We are fortunate to have resources like Southwest Michigan First, which help businesses like mine grow and the City of Sturgis, who has helped Owens over the years to continue on a path that enables us to have 41 families employed. In turn, we will all benefit from Owens Products moving forward into the future!”



Gary Kirtley, Owens Products CEO and owner