

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY Northwest Door

Editor's Note: In 2006, Northwest Door marks its 60th year. Here's a look back at its beginnings and key milestones.



Photos

1. First location of business in Tacoma, 1966-1976.
2. New manufacturing facility in Tacoma, 1976-1989. (From left) Steve DeWitt and his mother, Evelyn DeWitt; Paul DeWitt is seated, right front.
3. Aerial view of Northwest Door, 1987.
4. New office and manufacturing expansion, 1989-2006.
5. Steve (left) and Paul DeWitt, 1985.
6. Scott DeWitt (Steve's son, left) and Steve DeWitt, 2006.
7. New manufacturing facility in Fredrickson, Wash., 2006.

Photos courtesy of Northwest Door

Milestones

- 1946 ▶ Roy Stratton launches Crawford Door Sales, a garage door installation company in Tacoma, Wash.
- 1966 ▶ Steve DeWitt, his father, Paul, and his brother-in-law purchase Crawford Door Sales. Paul is president, and Steve is an installer.
- 1970 ▶ The company, now operating as Northwest Door, begins manufacturing wood garage doors in order to be more competitive in the builder market.
- 1976 ▶ The firm builds a new and larger manufacturing facility and sales office in Tacoma.
- 1977 ▶ With the opening of a sales office in Anchorage, Alaska, the company begins selling doors out of state.
- 1985 ▶ Paul DeWitt retires. His son, Steve DeWitt, becomes the new president.
- 1986 ▶ Northwest Door purchases Pacific Door & Spring, a manufacturer of torsion springs and commercial ribbed steel garage doors in Portland, Ore. Total workforce grows from 60 to 80.
- 1987 ▶ Continued growth requires the firm to expand into additional buildings at the same industrial park in Tacoma. Commercial aluminum garage doors are added to the product line.
- 1989 ▶ Northwest expands its product offering to include residential steel garage doors, introducing the Therma-Shield insulated steel sandwich raised-panel door, the only door of its kind produced on the West Coast. At the time, the firm's market is confined to western Washington and Alaska.
- 1992 ▶ To spread the market for the Therma-Shield door, Northwest opens three distribution centers in 1992, first in Denver, Colo., then Salt Lake City, Utah, and Spokane, Wash.

The company introduces the 500 series residential non-insulated steel door.
- 1999 ▶ Seeing a growing market for custom wood doors, the firm launches the Heritage Classic, a custom wood carriage-style garage door.
- 2000 ▶ Northwest goes online at www.nwdusa.com.
- 2001 ▶ A distribution center is opened in Portland, Ore.
- 2002 ▶ Two more distribution centers open, in Boise, Idaho, and Reno, Nev.

The firm introduces the Township Collection, a semi-custom wood carriage-style garage door.
- 2004 ▶ Northwest launches its first metal carriage-style door, the Infinity Classic, made of aluminum sections.

A new distribution center opens in Sunnyvale, Calif.
- 2006 ▶ To relieve congestion, consolidate operations, and meet the growing demand, the company moves all manufacturing under one roof in a new 280,000-sq. ft. facility in Fredrickson, Wash.

Another carriage-house door is added—the Therma Classic, a steel sandwich garage door.

Today, the firm has more than 250 employees and seven distribution centers, and markets its products primarily to 11 western states and western Canada.