

NEWS

Wounded Warrior owes success to mountain customers

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As its 17 years in business demonstrate, Wounded Warrior's popularity is anything but wounded.

Now found in 35 states, the ointment is considered "a medicine chest in a bottle," ideal for cuts, scrapes, bruises and a chest full of other skin afflictions. Despite its renown, Wounded Warrior had humble beginnings, its birth in Boone.

In the late 1980s, Red Alderman owned an herb supply company that sold to pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies. A fisherman friend in Louisiana asked Alderman what sort of herbs would soothe the cracked skin of his hands and his sore fingers. This got Alderman thinking.

"He spent about four years coming up with the formula that we use now," said Amy MacKay, Alderman's daughter and manager of Wounded Warrior. "He was giving it away just to family and friends for people with cuts, bruises, bug bites – things like that – but people were coming back and saying, 'I used it on my horse, on my dog, I gave it to my neighbor.'"

And those comments, MacKay said, would always end with, "I need some more."

Judging by the product's popularity among friends and family, Alderman began to market it, selling it to local businesses, such as Bare Essentials, Boone Drug and Mast General Store.

"And it just took off," MacKay said. "Everybody was crazy about it."

With Wounded Warrior continuing to soar in populari-

ty, Alderman eventually closed his herb business to focus solely on Wounded Warrior. Television commercials began to hit the airwaves, and residents and tourists would be sure to pick up a bottle while shopping. Tourists and second-home owners would take Wounded Warrior back home, and the ointment soon became popular in other states.



MacKay

"We're now on our 17th year, and it's just been selling like crazy," MacKay said. "We have such a good customer base – they're so loyal, and they'll tell their neighbor or family member, and it just goes from there. Everybody's giving it away or ordering more."

MacKay assumed management of the business five years ago, as Alderman was ready to pass the torch – or ginseng root in this case.

Though MacKay set up office in Wilmington, she owes Wounded Warrior's success to the High Country, and she said the local Eckerd's Drug reported that Wounded Warrior was the number one over-the-counter item.

"In the mountains, you'd be hard-pressed to find a store that doesn't carry it," she said. "Everybody knows they can get it in the mountains, but now they're realizing they can get it in other parts of the country or just order it online."

The ointment is an aloe gel, laden with extracts of witch hazel, goldenseal, white cedar, gotu kola, yarrow, calendula, comfrey leaf and lobelia. "The properties of the product are anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory," MacKay explained, saying they're suspended in corn alcohol to keep the ingredients pure.

Wounded Warrior also heals sunburn by soothing flaking, red skin, as well as bug bites to prevent swelling. MacKay said it is ideal for bee stings and other skin conditions. "I've had people call me and say they'd had a rash for a year but tried Wounded Warrior, and it was gone," she added.

The ointment's efficiency can also be attributed to Chief Two Trees, a Cherokee medicine man in North Carolina, who MacKay said was a good family friend. Two Trees inspired the product's name, as well as the bottle design, which depicts a red tail hawk clutching a ginseng root, flying by a crescent moon.

The herb business, in general, has soared like a hawk, with commonplace products featuring herbs and supplements, including toothpaste, MacKay said.

"People are realizing natural products work, and people don't want to put some strange chemical in their body," she continued.

On the Web: www.woundedwarriorointment.com

MEASURE

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The language states inflatable signs may be temporarily displayed in B-3 (general business) districts.

consider requiring a special use permit, to be determined at the next quarterly public hearing.

left exposed after completion of that particular phase of grading to 21 days, having formerly been 15

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