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800.296.7508
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VIRGINIA

CQ Commerce Quarterly
A Publication of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Fortessa Sets Tables Worldwide - From Virginia

When Scott and Eric Hamberger launched their tableware company, Fortessa, from their parents' garage, they never dreamed they would one day be doing business around the globe. Fifteen years into the business, the brothers have not only moved out of the garage - they've moved their product into 12 countries.

Fortessa, a designer, developer and marketer of high-quality tableware products for commercial food service and consumer markets, is based in Sterling, Virginia. The company operates a showroom and distribution center in Las Vegas, and last year, expanded its warehouse operations with the addition of a 90,000-square-foot facility in Winchester. The company partners with product suppliers from eight countries. In the last two years Fortessa, which employs 60, has grown 94 percent.

"Virginia is a great gateway- both internationally and domestically," said Scott Hamberger, Fortessa's Managing Director. "From a market and transportation standpoint, Virginia is a great place to be."

Being in the hospitality industry, customer service is top priority. Fortessa takes pride in its reputation for impeccable customer service-which is no easy task when it comes to the fragile nature of its products. Not only does Fortessa's product need to arrive on time-it needs to arrive in one piece.

One thing that helps the company's international efforts is the fact that Fortessa's Winchester facility has the distinction of being the only activated foreign trade zone in Northern Virginia and the first in Winchester. A foreign trade zone is a site in or near a U.S. Customs port of entry that is designated free of Customs entry procedures.

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“This designation not only offers opportunities to grow our company’s export business, but it will also result in new job creation locally,” Hamberger said. “ It will allow us to provide faster and more efficient service to our foreign partners and customers while also benefiting our local community.



Brothers Eric & Scott Hamberger (from left) show off the quality of their products to Warren Hammer, VEDP Project Manager