



Each month, we recognize one of the region's top manufacturers with the aid of NEPIRC, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center. Since 1988, NEPIRC has been working with manufacturers to improve their productivity, profitability, competitiveness and long-term viability through consultative services.



## Old Forge seat lift chair manufacturer among largest in U.S.

When Robert Golden, Sr., and his partner, Fred Kiwak, founded their seat lift chair company 31 years ago in Golden's garage in Pittston, Luzerne County, they couldn't have imagined the level of success they would achieve over the next three decades.

Started with a promise, "We Build Them Right the First Time," Golden Technologies today has the largest facility in the U.S. dedicated solely to the manufacture of seat lift chairs.

In addition to Golden and Kiwak, Golden's wife, Helen; son, Richard; and daughter, Kathy, were the first employees of Golden Technologies. Less than a year after they began, the company had outgrown the garage and moved into a 5,000-square-foot facility in the nearby borough of Wyoming.

Today, Golden Technologies manufactures all of its seat lift chairs in Old Forge from two factories and has distribution centers in Laffin, Pennsylvania, and in Florida, Kansas and California.



**Richard Golden, CEO**

These chairs are sold throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. Additionally, the company operates a manufacturing facility in Kingston where the company builds its power scooters and power wheelchairs that have been offered since the early 1990s.

Before launching his company, Robert Golden owned and operated a furniture store. His son and Kiwak worked for a company that manufactured seat lift chairs.

"Being in furniture sales, my father believed that seat lift chairs should be made like a fine piece of furniture instead of just a usual commodity lift chair," Richard Golden said. "Fred Kiwak and I had the background in lift chairs and my father had the experience in the furniture business. We put these together and launched Golden Technologies.

"We have another saying, it's 'From Small to Tall, we Build 'em all,'" Golden said. Golden Technologies manufactures a wide variety of chairs for people of all sizes, from petite to those weighing up to 700 pounds.

Golden Technologies holds several patents including one for its MaxiComfort Ultimate Recline Technology that's used to make the only lift chair offering a zero-gravity position.

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**Employees work on the production floor at Golden Technologies**

In 2002, Golden Technologies was chosen as the Lackawanna County Business of the Year, and in 2015 was awarded the PA Governor's ImPAct Award.

Golden credits the company's dedicated workforce and research and development capabilities for its growth and success. Kiwak still heads research and development for the company. Golden Technologies' workforce has grown by double digits year after year since its founding. Today, the company employs more than 500 people. "We treat our employees very well, and because of this, many of them have been with our company for 10, 20, and 25 years or more," he said.

"When we moved from the garage to our very first building, Ed Pollard, Allan Mizenko and Nancy Kuffa came onboard in our woodworking and upholstery shops and have been instrumental in the design and building of our seat lift chairs ever since," Golden said, noting that these employees are only a few of the many employees that have been with the company since its early years.

Golden also said that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC)

has been instrumental in assisting the company with implementing good business practices in manufacturing. "They've been phenomenal for us. We've just completed a training course for our supervisors on Lean Manufacturing and they assisted us with Six Sigma as well," Golden said. Six Sigma principles help to eliminate defects, improve throughout and reduce costs.

"We really enjoy working with NEPIRC and they have always been there to help us."

Golden is proud of his company's accomplishments and the fact that all of their products are built in America. "We are the only manufacturer that builds its lift chairs from start to finish right in one plant."

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