

Colorado originals



*Ideas invented
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big leagues*

Colorado is known throughout the world as an exporter of computers, rockets and beef. But most people may not realize the state also is the birthplace of products that have changed industries — as well as those that have just made everyday life a little easier. It's tough to make it through a day without encountering at least a few things that were invented or perfected in Colorado — whether it's the cheeseburger you eat for lunch, the soy milk in your refrigerator or the device that inflates your car's air bag. Some innovations have gone on to become major forces in the state's economy. When Warren Monfort created the feedlot in 1930, for example, he set the stage for what has become a \$2.4 billion-a-year statewide beef cattle industry. And if patent applications are any indication, more new ideas are yet to come. According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Coloradans — who represent less than 2 percent of the U.S. population — submitted 7 percent of the patent applications filed in 2003; two-thirds were granted. For a sampling of the products and services that Colorado exports to the world, turn to pages 10-11K.

Waterproof clogs

While sailing from Isla Mujeres, Mexico, to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Coloradan Scott Seamans started dreaming about the perfect boat shoe. It wouldn't slip or leave marks on the deck, nor would it smell bad when basted with seawater and sweat. He settled on a clog riddled with air vents, then added a back strap to keep it from falling off in the water. Once ashore, he found a company that manufactures the "closed-cell" resin that makes the shoe lighter than rubber but less porous than plastic.

Seamans named his **waterproof clogs** Crocs and introduced them at a Miami boat show. They sold well enough that he and partners George Boedecker and Lyndon Hanson ramped up production and in 2002 made their headquarters in Niwot. In just two years, they've sold \$25 million worth of the brightly hued shoes — roughly 500,000 pairs, including three shipments to musician Graham Nash, who stocks them for guests at his Hawaii and California homes.

Doctors and chefs swear by the comfort and anti-microbial qualities. Fashionistas, primarily female, love the rainbow colors.

— Linda Castrone

