

THE NOCK IS GETTING SAUCED WITH UNCLE STEVIE'S

ABOUT UNCLE STEVIE'S SIGNATURE SAUCES LLC. The owner of Uncle Stevie's Signature Sauces, Steve Vaughan, began making his BBQ sauce about 15 years ago. Now you'll find a wide range of flavors that the company produces, from extremely spicy to the uniqueness of a lime BBQ sauce. The jars all feature a picture of various family members or friends. These sauces are sold online and locally at a number of markets, and are served at a variety of restaurants in the region. Uncle Stevie's has won numerous national and international awards as well!

THE CHALLENGE. Steve Vaughan grew tired of making sauce at home. It was taking over his own kitchen, which became messy and cramped. Production became more complicated as he developed new flavors of sauce. He needed a better option to accommodate the growing business.

Friends, family, and co-workers were interested in buying his sauces. They all began tell him that he needed to get his product into stores. That meant he needed to meet certain regulations and not fall under any cottage food laws. A facility was needed to be able to provide recipe modifications for increased batch production, food safety compliance, and other assistance specifically geared toward food entrepreneurs. The questions became, "Does he break ground to build his dream or let his passion for sauce-making die?"

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Luckily, Steve learned about the Northwest Ohio Cooperative Kitchen(NOCK) in Bowling Green, Ohio, through CIFT, the regional coordinator of the Ohio MEP, part of the MEP National Network™. He investigated using the NOCK's commercial equipment to make and package his sauces, which would allow Uncle Stevie's to process a consistent product in an environment that adhered to food safety guidelines. He began using the kitchen in 2018 and consistently returns each quarter to produce more. Uncle Stevie's now produces 27 variations of the original sauce with more in development.

"Without the NOCK, we would not be able to produce at the volumes that we need. Yes, you may find smaller kitchens to make tiny batches of sauces, but the NOCK has scale in mind. Our daily production record currently stands at 3,600 16.5 oz jars in a 9-hour shift. That covers everything from prep, to cook, and finally filling. We did come back the next day to label them all! The NOCK staff is good at listening to the needs of their clients and making improvements. You only pay a small hourly fee to use the facility. All electricity, cleaning supplies, and water usage are included. The NOCK provides the knowledge, the people, and any assistance needed. "

-Steve Vaughan, Founder/Co-owner

RESULTS



\$75,000 in new or retained sales



\$2,805,450 in new investment



Won **4** Scovies, 2 Weekend of Fire, 2 Fiery Foods, 5 Michigan Renaissance cookoffs

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