

HomeMovie.Com

Preserving Videos on DVD

Winthrop, Washington

www.homemovie.com



John Larsen, CEO of HomeMovie.Com has a simple business mission: to preserve video memories. His company, an industry-leading business in the rural Eastern Washington town of Winthrop, uses sophisticated digital technology to convert videotapes to higher quality and more durable DVDs. In 1999, John noticed that the home movies of his three children had dramatically lost quality in the years since he last viewed them. He did some research and learned that videotapes degrade with every viewing and every copy. John felt that “a kind of a national tragedy was about to transpire. Billions of hours of videotape is rotting away and most people don’t know it.” The result of that concern was HomeMovie.Com. John explains, “What we offer is a higher level of quality. Customers can edit and share their memories and even copy the video to streaming video for family and friends to view. To be able to share this kind of video over the Internet is extremely powerful.”

HomeMovie.Com was originally located in Everett Washington, with John commuting between the company headquarters and his home in Woodinville. John and his wife looked at their quality of life and decided it was time to move. They wanted to live in a small and out of the way community. They chose Winthrop and recognized very quickly that there was a need in the community for a business exactly like the one they were planning to leave behind. John explains, “Winthrop has a tourist-based economy; there haven’t been enough good jobs where people can earn a living and put their kids through college. In a community like this you need employment at all economic levels.”

HomeMovie.Com currently has 12 employees, with plans for 100. Before John could begin fulfilling his dream, he had work to do. He remodeled a 10,000 square foot building to house the business and created the powerful Internet infrastructure his business demanded, by leasing fiber from the local phone company. He also began to develop the skilled workforce he needed, with a project he calls “Bring Back the Kids.” John describes the purpose of this community effort, “I want to reach out to people in the community with kids who have graduated high school and moved away. If we are going to see the kind of economic growth we want here, we need these kids, with their skills, experience and love of the community back in Winthrop.”

Before long, John saw another, even more urgent need for his company: a way for soldiers, far from home, to stay in contact with friends and family in a way that goes beyond photos or phone calls. He started “Operation Enduring Love,” allowing service-member families to stream 30 minutes of video to their loved ones overseas free of charge. The project recently won Senator Patty Murray’s Golden Tennis Shoe Award for achievement in public service.

HomeMovie.Com and Winthrop are evolving together. The remodeled facility works well and John now feels that the Internet speed and the bandwidth that supports his company is “virtually unlimited”. He would like to see other high tech companies relocate to Winthrop. He says, “We have a beautiful environment; it’s quite a unique place to live. What small towns like Winthrop really need is vitality and money. We need to attract full spectrum business that can create new economic opportunities.” He envisions a process where business leaders who have been successful in urban markets and are ready for a change, will invest their skills and their profits in smaller, rural communities. He believes they’ll discover that in a small community, a successful entrepreneur can affect powerful local change – an opportunity not often found in larger, more competitive markets. John sees success in this way, “When my kids get out of college, they’ll be able to move back to Winthrop. I want to create an environment where that can happen. If I can do that for my kids, I will have also created an environment for lots of other kids.”

“HomeMovie.Com relocated our business to the Methow Valley to take advantage of the lifestyle and benefits of doing business in a small, rural community. The wonderful success we have achieved only reinforces our commitment to this decision.”

- John Larsen
CEO, HomeMovie.Com