



Greater La Porte Economic Development Corporation  
Business Success Stories



## American Signature Inc.

The La Porte area has a number of logistical advantages for American Signature, Inc., one of the country's leading manufacturers and retailers of home furnishings, under the Value City and American Signature brands.

American Signature is new to La Porte. During 2004, the company built a new, 500,000 square foot distribution facility in the East gate Industrial Park in La Porte. The facility opened in February 2005. At peak performance, the distribution center will handle 100 trailers arriving at its docks for loading or unloading during a 24-hour period.

According to Tim Edgell, General Manager at American Signature, distributing from the La Porte location allows the company to reach their region's 32 stores in a seven state area with next-day delivery. This central location facilitates American Signature's ability to directly control their entire supply chain, including a private fleet of trucks, which affords the company the opportunity to achieve economies of scale in manufacturing, distribution, and retail. The La Porte location also has advantages in terms of access to suppliers in the Upper Midwest, including western Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. The company has plans to expand to 42 stores by 2008, serving these locations from La Porte as well.



The distribution facility incorporates the latest in computer technology to monitor shipments. Innovations utilize the high ceiling capacity (40 feet), and the ability to accommodate bulky furniture items. Safety and a disciplined, team-oriented approach on the shop floor are keys to performance. The company has an intense training program to prepare staff for the safe and effective operation of equipment.

American Signature's goal, according to Mr. Edgell, is to become a "preferred employer" in the La Porte community. The company's objectives are to provide a superior work environment and employee development that makes American Signature an exceptional place to work. Part of this initiative is to partner with local schools to make students aware and better prepared for career opportunities at not only American Signature but in the manufacturing and distribution fields. The La Porte Community School Corporation has been a very active participant in this initiative.

