



Southern Oregon Regional
Economic Development, Inc.
Wildly Serious About Business

When Work Is Play



Think back to when you were five years old. The best part of going to a park wasn't necessarily the walking trails or shaded picnic tables—the highlight was always the playground. Playcraft Systems, tucked into the edge of Grants Pass, believes in the importance of play and the impact safe playgrounds can make on an entire community.

Krauss Craft began in 1990 with the construction of wooden sheds. Over the following years, these sheds began incorporating steel and plastic—until the company switched from sheds to playground equipment. In 2017, the company was acquired by PlayCore and officially changed its name to Playcraft Systems. They chose to remain in the Rogue Valley, and today, Southern Oregonians will find Playcraft playgrounds in nearly every city park. Moreover, Playcraft Systems is not just a local supplier—or even a national supplier. Currently, the company has playgrounds in Japan, China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and several other countries in Asia.

“A well-developed playground can help bring communities together,” Playcraft points out on their website. Playcraft Systems is proud to be involved in that atmosphere of togetherness—to do their part in making cities, schools, and even military bases better places.

Playcraft Systems
123 N Valley Dr.
Grants Pass, OR 97526
www.playcraftsystems.com
(541) 955-9199

*“It's a lot of production,
but we're making
playgrounds—it's fun.”*

-CJ Schatza
General Manager

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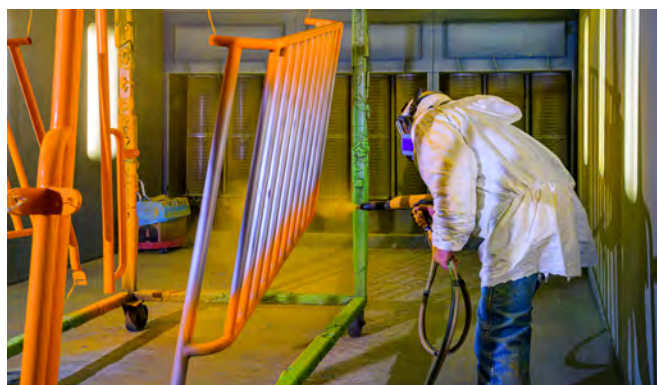
Think back to when you were five years old. The best part of going to a park wasn't necessarily the walking trails or shaded picnic tables—the highlight was always the playground. Maybe it was wooden—or heavy-duty plastic in bright colors. Was there a slide? Ten slides? However big or small, children all seem to form memories around their favorite playground. Playcraft Systems, tucked into the edge of Grants Pass, believes in the importance of play and the impact safe playgrounds can make on an entire community.

Playcraft Systems is constantly growing as both a local and international supplier of everything playground-related. Yet Playcraft—like most companies—started small. Krauss Craft began in 1990 with the construction of wooden sheds. Over the following years, these sheds began incorporating steel and plastic—until the company switched from sheds to playground equipment.

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A Playcraft employee works on a piece of a future playground.



A Playcraft employee paints a playground railing.

Despite the company's international status, they are grateful to be located in Southern Oregon. Not only is it close to I-5 and Pacific ports, but the quality of life is good. "The people who are here want to be here," says CJ Schatza, Playcraft's General Manager. Each quarter at Playcraft, the managers get together and cook a meal for everyone else. During the summers, the whole family is invited for an employee picnic, and there are other team-building events throughout the year (from monthly contests to rafting excursions). "It's a lot of production, but we're making playgrounds," continues Schatza, "It's supposed to be fun."

The process of building a playground takes many different skills. From graphic designers and salespeople, to welders and heavy equipment operators, each job is a team effort. On average, Playcraft Systems has a staff of 160, and while some positions appreciate prior experience or certifications, most training is done in-house, so even employees fresh out of high school can apply and learn skills over time. Any given playground project can take between four to five weeks to produce, though it should be noted, Playcraft doesn't just produce playgrounds.

Playcraft Systems also creates picnic tables, outdoor desks, sanitizing stations and cornhole games—among other products. With a huge variety of colors, themes, and layouts to choose from, one look through a Playcraft catalog will make anyone feel like a kid again. Picking a product is only half of the job though. From fundraising, to on-site installation, most buyers have a list of steps to go through.

"A well-developed playground can help bring communities together," Playcraft points out on their website. And the company provides plenty of resources to help the community do just that. Parks—and playgrounds—are areas where families, friends, and even strangers can come together and enjoy being outside. Playcraft Systems is proud to be involved in that atmosphere of togetherness—to do their part in making cities, schools, and even military bases better places.

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