



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

Bristling with Creativity



Photo by David Gibb | dgibbphoto.com

In unsuspecting Southern Oregon, there is a company that has manufactured a piece of equipment for the Mars Rover. That very same company also creates custom pieces for underwater drones, high-end automotive detailing—and occasionally hairbrushes. Braun Brush has been around since 1875—a family business that uses new systems to solve the problems other brush manufacturers may not want to take on. “We’re not afraid of challenging projects,” says Randy Peña, Vice President of Braun Brush West. “We want the industry to know that when they run into difficulties, we’re the place to go.”

Most of Braun Brush’s west coast manufacturing is centered around brushes used in automotive detailing. However, almost any machine in existence has some sort of brush component, whether in performance or as a cleaning solution.

In 2018, with the help of SOREDI and other local partners, Braun Brush moved to the Rogue Valley. In Southern Oregon, they discovered that the traffic was much friendlier than Bay Area commutes, and that the valley was simply beautiful. With new partnerships from local companies, and enterprise zone property tax incentives to help in years of future growth, Braun Brush settled into their newly built 12,000 s/f Medford office in the Spring of 2021.

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*— Randy Peña,
Vice President, Braun Brush West*

THE SOUTHERN OREGON
EDGE

www.SOREDIOrg/edge
by SOREDI | Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.

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Because of this mindset, Braun Brush has tackled a wide variety of projects over the years. As a ‘makerspace of brush manufacturers,’ they frequently employ creative solutions for stand-alone brushes, or those that they produce in mass quantities.

Most of their west coast manufacturing is centered around brushes used in automotive detailing—upper-crust automotive detailing at that. However, almost any machine in existence has some sort of brush component, whether in performance or as a cleaning solution. “We make some crazy stuff,” laughed Peña, explaining the process of building giant rug-cleaning brushes used by companies like Cintas.

Braun Brush currently has about fifteen employees in the Rogue Valley; another thirty-five work at an office in Albertson, New York. Since the organization is relatively small, they can remain nimble through the ups and downs of the industry. In general, the manufacturing world tends to follow cycles of importing and exporting work, but Braun Brush is proud to keep their operations in America. However, their west coast office hasn’t always been in Oregon. In 2018, with the help of SOREDI and other local partners, Braun Brush moved their California operations (and relocated their employees), to the Rogue Valley. In Southern Oregon, they discovered that the traffic was much friendlier than Bay Area commutes, and that the valley was simply beautiful. With new partnerships from local companies, and enterprise zone property tax incentives to help in years of future growth, Braun Brush settled into their newly built 12,000 s/f Medford office in the Spring of 2021.



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Packaging Wheel Woolies- brushes for automotive detailing.



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When it comes to hiring employees, Peña will tell anyone that the top qualification for a job at Braun Brush is simply good character. While some positions in the company appreciate management or engineering experience, a job on the production floor doesn’t require years of school. The employees work as a team to face down the puzzles of the brush manufacturing industry, and a relaxed, family atmosphere prevails. “We had one man in the company who worked with us for seventy-two years! That’s what happens when you keep a family environment.”

The future of Braun Brush is probably more creative than you would ever imagine. As the company takes on more out-of-the-box projects in untraditional industries, Southern Oregon could even see brush manufacturing become an art. That’s right—art made of horse-hair and vegetable fiber brushes! Already, companies like Google have begun to feature colorful and unique displays on their corporate walls—displays made using Braun Brush products. With different fibers, lending color and texture differences, businesses can feature their logos or other artwork, while using the bristle-decorated walls to cancel sound in conference rooms or lobbies.

In 2020, Braun Brush received the SOREDI Prosper Award for Tenacity. You simply can’t brush off a company that’s been in business for 147 years—and is still innovative and efficient! And with such a diverse world of brush-manufacturing orders, the future will most certainly not be boring for Braun Brush. “The joy of figuring out puzzles as a team isn’t work,” said Peña, fondly. “We get to invent things for a living!”

