

# Door & Access Systems

The Newsmagazine of the Door & Access Systems Industry



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As recently as 10 years ago, Windsor Door of Little Rock, Ark., was considered one of the top four or five largest manufacturers in our industry. But things have changed.

- Windsor Door now has about 70 employees.
- Windsor has closed all but three of its 30 distribution centers.
- Last December, Windsor sold off its rolling door operations to Janus.
- On May 23, 2011, a private investment group of individuals from Windsor and Garage Door Services of Houston acquired the assets of Windsor Republic Doors' garage door division. (GDS of Houston is a Windsor dealer.)

To find out what's happening at Windsor and where the company is going, we talked with its president, Brad Gridley.

**What led to the purchase of Windsor Republic Doors?**

Initially, one of the partners at Garage Door Services of Houston approached his own company and Windsor Republic Doors with the idea. Once the decision was made to sit down at the table and review the opportunity, things progressed very steadily until the closing on May 23.

**Since you're one of those who bought the company, what were the primary reasons why you personally thought this was a good and promising investment?**

As the president of Windsor Republic Doors, I could see that the changes we were making were having a positive impact and that

the future of the new company held a lot of opportunity for Windsor and the Windsor brand.

**Has your name now officially returned to "Windsor Door"?**

Yes, we are now officially Windsor Door.

**Was any part of Windsor Door not involved in the transaction?**

There was some sheet door equipment that was not part of the acquisition. Other than that, the investors acquired all of the productive assets of Windsor Republic Doors.

**Your press release mentions "significant restructuring over the last couple years." Can you describe the key aspects of that restructuring?**

It is no secret that the last several years have created a challenging environment for all manufacturers and in particular the door

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industry. As with other door companies, we have right-sized our company by focusing on our strengths, introducing new products, and by better utilizing our assets.

**How many different people are involved in the private investment group? Does any particular person or group have a majority share of ownership?**

There are several investors, and Garage Door Services of Houston holds a majority interest.

**Do all or most of the members of your investment group have garage door industry experience?**

All of the investors have some garage door industry experience.

**Tell us more about the investors from Garage Door Services of Houston. Who are they, and why did they want to participate in the purchase of Windsor?**

Garage Door Services was established in Houston, Texas, in February 1991 through the purchase of Dial One Garage Doors. They now have seven locations in Texas and Oklahoma (Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Lockhart, Arlington, Richardson, and Oklahoma City). GDS and their owners have a variety of investments in oil and gas, ranching, real estate, and the door industry.

Participation in the Windsor acquisition was a good fit to support their door company and diversify their portfolio with the addition of manufacturing.

**Around the country, there are several garage door repair companies that go by the name "Garage Door Service" or GDS. Is Garage Door Services of Houston related to this group?**

No, not at all. Garage Door Services of Houston has no affiliation with the service companies you mentioned.

**I understand that you will continue as the president of Windsor Door. Who are the other key members of your management team?**

I rely heavily on my direct reports—Sharon Faulkner, vice president of services, who manages our distribution and customer service, and Dave McMahan, vice president of manufacturing, who oversees all our manufacturing activity. Our DC managers are also important members of our management team.

*Brad Gridley*

**What is your personal background (both occupation and education)? What did you do before coming to Windsor?**

I am originally from Kansas and graduated from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing. Prior to joining Windsor Republic, I spent 19 years in the packaging business in a variety of positions in sales, sales management, and general management.

**Will all of your manufacturing stay in the Little Rock area?**

We intend to continue manufacturing all Windsor products in our Little Rock facility. Our investor partner, Garage Door Services of Houston, also manufactures custom wood doors in Lockhart, Texas, and Oklahoma City, Okla. We have added these products to the Windsor product mix for distribution.

**How many employees do you currently have?**

Like other manufacturing companies, our workforce is much smaller than it was a few years ago due to the economy. We currently have around 70 employees.

**What does your product line now include? Are you completely focused on commercial and sectional garage doors?**

Commercial and residential sectional doors are strengths for Windsor, and we will continue to manufacture these products in our Little

Rock facility. We also plan to continue to offer non-Windsor-manufactured products to our customers directly and through our distribution centers. These products include operators, sheet doors, rolling steel doors, and custom wood doors.

**Which door is your most popular model?**

It is my understanding that Windsor helped pioneer many of the features used on today's pan door products. True to our history, the steel raised-panel Windsor Models 724 and 730 remain our most popular models.

**Do you have plans to introduce any new models in the next year or so?**

In the last year, we introduced several new products. We began offering our SteelWood products last August and introduced a new version of this door at the IDA show in June. We are in the process of introducing our Windsoreco line of doors, which are environmentally friendly products with higher R-values.

This line includes a residential and a commercial urethane product, each having a 14+ R-value. We do plan to offer the Garage Door Services of Houston custom wood products, and we are currently test marketing a new retail product. We are very excited about the new products we are bringing to market soon.

**Windsor has a long history of good connections with the builder market. What's the current status of your relationship with the builder market?**

We are still active in this market and have relationships with several large builders. We plan to remain active in this market.

**In 2000, Windsor had more than 30 distribution centers around the country. Your acquisition includes three distribution centers in El Paso, Texas, Mira Loma, Calif., and Nashville, Tenn. What were the primary factors that led to the reduction in distribution centers?**

This has simply been a part of our restructuring and right-sizing to respond to the challenging economy.

**Are your production workers in Little Rock still organized under the Sheet Metal Workers union?**

Our hourly manufacturing employees are still represented by the Sheet Metal Workers. We have an

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excellent relationship with the Sheet Metal Workers, and they have been good partners, especially through the difficult economic times our industry has faced over the last several years.

**To help our readers understand your struggles over the last few years, can you describe the key internal and external factors that have negatively affected Windsor?**

Windsor has dealt with the same issues the entire industry has faced: a poor housing market, an economic recession, slow post-recession growth, and higher steel prices. All these factors have affected Windsor the same as other manufacturers.

**As you approach dealers to carry Windsor doors, what do you tell them? What are the key reasons why dealers should take a look at the new Windsor Door?**

Windsor has an aggressive ownership group and a streamlined management team that reacts quickly to changes in the marketplace to meet customer needs.

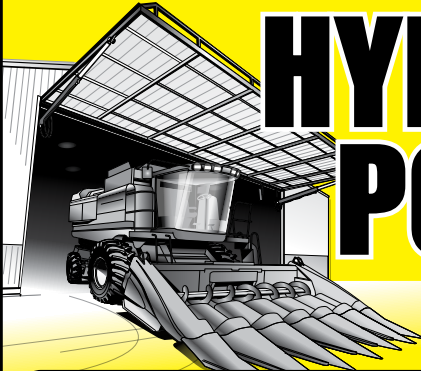
We will continue to promote the Windsor brand by providing excellent service and continuing to offer new products that will help our customers grow their businesses. We have a unique perspective because our ownership group has experience in manufacturing, distributing, and installing commercial and residential garage doors. We understand the needs of each, have faced the same battles, and can help our customers succeed in their markets. ■

## CHANGING HANDS Windsor Through the Years

- 1940s:** Two men named Cardone and Clapsaddle start manufacturing a seven-section residential steel door on Long Island, N.Y.
- 1950s:** The company changes hands several times, with doors being manufactured in Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Illinois.
- 1961:** The Webb family in Little Rock, owners of Wel-Bilt Vulcan Company, a maker of a one-piece steel residential garage door, acquires the tooling for the seven-section door. The Windsor Door name begins.
- 1969:** Ceco Corporation purchases Windsor Door, changing Windsor's name to Ceco/Windsor. Ceco later merges with H.H. Robertson.
- 1992:** United Dominion Industries buys the Windsor door operations from Robertson/Ceco. The company changes the name back to Windsor Door.
- 1995:** United Dominion also purchases McKee Door of Aurora, Ill., merging some McKee assets into Windsor Door.
- 1997:** American Buildings Company (ABC) of Eufaula, Ala., buys Windsor Door from United Dominion.
- 1999:** Onex Corporation acquires ABC. Onex soon forms Magnatrx Corporation, a holding company, and Windsor becomes part of the Entry Systems Group, a division of Magnatrx.
- 2003:** Magnatrx files for Chap. 11 bankruptcy protection. Windsor continues production.
- 2004:** Desco Capital Partners, owners of the Republic Steel door and frame division, acquire Windsor Door. Republic and Windsor are merged to form Windsor Republic Doors.
- 2011:** A private investment group of individuals from Garage Door Services of Houston and Windsor Door acquires the assets of Windsor Republic Doors' garage door division. The name returns to Windsor Door.

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