

Threshold, seeing healthy growth, is hiring

Nutritional supplements manufacturer is city's largest employer

By JONDI GUMZ

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SCOTTS VALLEY — The recession pounded many employers, but not Threshold Enterprises.

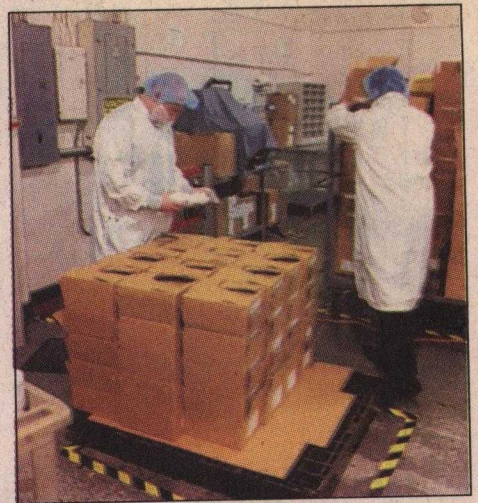
The company, which started out as a dis-

tributor of natural products then expanded into manufacturing with 24/7 production of Source Naturals and Planetary Herbals, has doubled its workforce since 2004 from 400 to 873, and plans a Friday afternoon job fair to

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Threshold Enterprises, which has grown its workforce to 873, with 599 in Scotts Valley and 274 in Santa Cruz, manufactures nutritional supplements in Scotts Valley.

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THRESHOLD

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fill more than 30 positions.

"During the worst of the recession, we've been growing steadily," said Ira Goldberg, a New York native who founded Threshold Enterprises in 1978. "We never stopped our growth pattern."

The privately held company — the largest employer in Scotts Valley with 599 workers — does not release sales figures, but Goldberg reports multimillion-dollar sales and average annual double-digit growth, better than the industry as a whole.

Dietary supplement sales topped \$32 billion last year, up 7.4 percent compared to 2011 and 7 percent the previous year, according to Natural Foods Merchandiser.

Source Naturals' Wellness Formula Source, developed in 1982, has been the top seller in the immune support category winning the Vity Award from Vitamin Retailer magazine five years in a row.

"You have to work at staying healthy," said Goldberg, who has written an 80-page booklet about the revolution he sees in health care, shifting from medical treatments to prevention of disease via nutrition.

"There's a sea change we're in the middle of," he said. "People are taking an interest in their own health."

He cites two reasons for Threshold's upward trajectory: Consumer demand is one, and the other is its business model as a distributor and a manufacturer, which he said "gives us a degree of resilience."

Several dietary supplement manufacturers call Santa Cruz County home: Santa Cruz Nutritionals, founded in 1968 under the name Harmony Foods and sold to new owners in July; Rainbow Light Nutritional Systems, founded in 1981 and building a new location on the Santa Cruz Westside; and Nordic Naturals, founded in 1995 and currently hiring for its Watsonville headquarters.

Threshold is the second largest distributor of nutritional supplements and natural health and beauty products in the nation, after Select Nutrition, a subsidiary of publicly traded United National Foods Inc. in Philadelphia. Yet Threshold's accomplishments are not well known locally, largely because

IF YOU GO

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ENTERPRISES
JOB FAIR

WHAT: Manufacturer and distributor of Source Naturals and Planetary Herbals.

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m. Friday

WHERE: 19 Janis Way off El Pueblo Road in Scotts Valley.

DETAILS: Many jobs open in manufacturing and packaging departments, swing shift 2 to 10:30 p.m. and graveyard shift, 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Full-time and part-time schedules.

INFORMATION: www.thresholdenterprises.com.

of Goldberg's preference to not pursue publicity.

Today, Source Naturals offers more than 750 products, and its Life Force Multiple, Essential Enzymes and Melatonin, have all been top sellers and Vity Award winners.

The Planetary Herbals line has 240 products, with many formulations by Santa Cruz herbalist Michael Tierra.

With demand increasing, Threshold Enterprises has been operating at capacity.

In Scotts Valley, "things are tight," Goldberg said. "We don't have enough space."

He is leasing another 20,000 square feet on the Santa Cruz Westside, where Threshold's distribution center employs 274 people.

With 80,000 square feet in Scotts Valley and 140,000 to 150,000 square feet in the former Wrigley and Lipton buildings in Santa Cruz, Threshold will have a footprint of 220,000 to 230,000 square feet.

An August job fair at the distribution center attracted 85 applicants, 45 were considered, and 17 accepted offers and starting working.

"All this talk about bringing manufacturing to the U.S., here's a manufacturer thriving and growing," Goldberg said.

After 35 years in business, Goldberg is not thinking of retirement.

"I'm a healthy 64," said Goldberg, a vegan and vegetarian who takes his own products and "eats organic whenever I can. I still have quite a bit more work to do."

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