

## Made in America

### Embroidery Solutions produces star fields for American flags

BY JOANNA HAYES

**THE AMERICAN FLAG** is a source of pride for all Americans, especially during the 250th anniversary of the country's founding.

Being a part of making the American flag is an even bigger honor for Embroidery Solutions, its employees and owner Larry Severini.

"The American flag is the unifying symbol representing all the commitments and sacrifices that generations of our forefathers have made," says Severini. "They fought for it and died for it."

Embroidery Solutions specializes in producing star fields, the embroidered stars on the blue background of the American flag. If you have a porch flag, it's likely Embroidery Solutions had a part in making it. The company produces 3.5-million-star fields of all sizes per year. This represents up to 60% of the star fields for all American flags made in the United States.

The flags Embroidery Solutions helps produce fly over some of the nation's most important landmarks, including the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Senate and House of Representatives,



Larry Severini (left), owner of Embroidery Solutions, and Ronald Carter, SEC manager economic development and government affairs.

PHOTOS BY JOANNA HAYES

and all government offices such as post offices and military bases around the world. The company sells its star fields to flag manufacturers, whose finished products are then distributed for commercial sales through a nationwide network of flag dealers, represented by the National Independent Flag Dealers Association (NIFDA) as well as to retailers such as Home Depot, Lowes, Target, Sam's Club and Costco.

A member of the Flag Manufacturing Association of America (FMAA), Severini is passionate about supporting the American-made flag industry.

### Embroidery Solutions

- ▶ Schiffler embroidery manufacturer.
- ▶ Produces star fields for United States of America flags.
- ▶ Largest embroidery factory in America.
- ▶ Located in Kingstree.

"The product we make is deeply symbolic," says Severini. "I think Americans deserve to know where their flags were made."

The Flags Manufacturers Association of America represents over 90% of all American flag makers and provides a "FMAA Certification" label that is placed on flags made entirely in the United States. This helps distinguish flags made in the U.S. from foreign-made flags, which are often falsely advertised as American-made.

The domestic industry sells millions of sewn American flags each year. However, unfortunately, a similar number of flags are imported, mostly from China. Severini serves as the Washington liaison for the Flags Manufacturers Association



Employees, like Yorlenis Gomez, are dedicated to precision in their work.



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of America, advocating for transparency and domestic manufacturing.

Embroidery Solutions' commitment to quality and reliability is rooted in its history. The company specializes in schiffl embroidery, a precise, machine-made embroidery technique, which dates back over 150 years to hand-operated machines. The equipment the company uses today to produce star fields was originally developed to make lace.

Embroidery Solutions was created in 2008 when Severini and business partner Victor Gorlaski combined forces. Before joining together, each owned his own business. Severini started in lace embroidery within home furnishings and the women's fashion industries, founding his company in New Jersey. During the 1980s and 1990s, as much of the industry moved offshore, domestic demand for women's fashion and home furnishing embroidery declined significantly. In response, Severini's company pivoted to star fields, an area in which Gorlaski was already working.

When operations in Kingstree began in 2008, the company had about 20 employees and was running six older model schiffl machines. Today Embroidery Solutions has 95 full-time employees and 12 of the most technologically advanced schiffl machines in the world, running 24 hours a day. The company is now the largest schiffl embroidery factory in America.

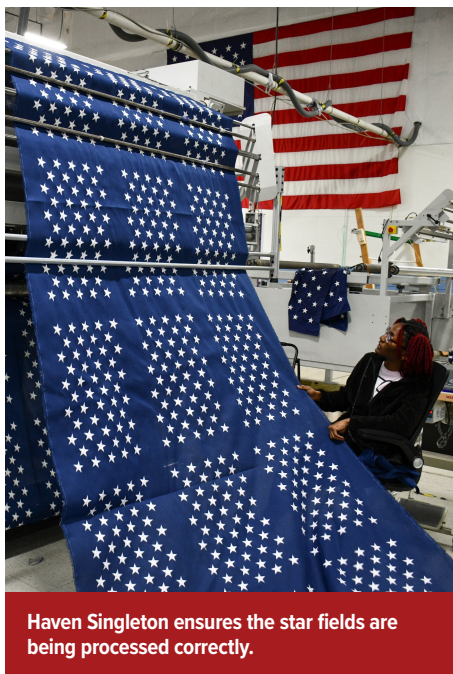
"The state of South Carolina has been tremendously supportive of manufacturing and our small business," says Severini. "The Department of Commerce, local government, the Williamsburg Economic Development Group, SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Santee Electric have all helped us thrive. Santee Electric has been a great champion of our company."

Beyond manufacturing, Embroidery Solutions is dedicated to giving back. The company has provided support to Quilts of Valor, an organization dedicated to making quilts for military members, for almost 15 years. The quilts made are awarded to living U.S. military service

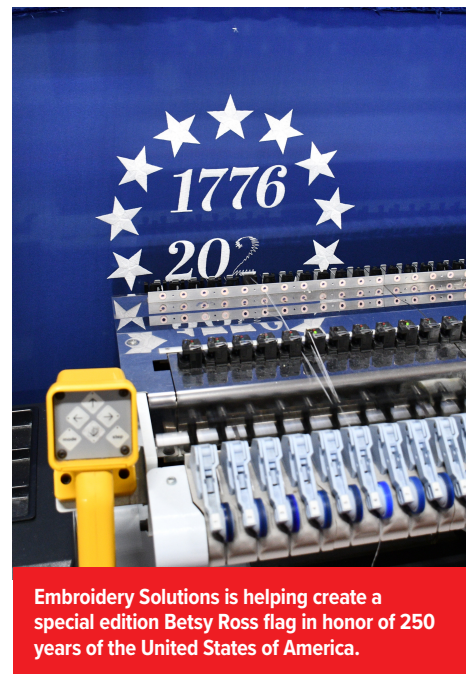


Ashley Burrows is involved in one of the last steps of making the star fields.

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Haven Singleton ensures the star fields are being processed correctly.



Embroidery Solutions is helping create a special edition Betsy Ross flag in honor of 250 years of the United States of America.

members or veterans who served from 1910 to the present. Eligible individuals include those with honorable or general discharge, active-duty personnel, National Guard and Reservists.

Embroidery Solutions donates leftover fabric and star fields to help the organization with its initiative.

"Quilts of Valor was something I came across watching the news 15 years ago," says Severini. "When I saw what they were doing, I knew it aligned with what

we are passionate about and that we could help. Instead of throwing away leftover fabric, we give it to them to help with their quilts."

Supporting Quilts of Valor is another way Embroidery Solutions demonstrates its commitment to America and those who have served their country.

The next time you see an American flag flying high, there's a good chance Embroidery Solutions had a hand in making it.