

MEET NOTIONS SPONSOR: Hancock Fabrics

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Hancock Fabrics will celebrate its 53rd anniversary this September. Since the Hancock Textile Company was founded in 1957 by Lawrence Doyce (L.D.) Hancock, the company has taken many turns.

Originally, the company was primarily a wholesaler who supplied a growing base of independent fabric retailers who operated in the South and Southwest. But shortly after opening the business, L.D. decided to start selling his fabrics directly to consumers. By the early 1970s, Hancock Textile Company had 80 company-owned stores and 200 wholesale independent customers.

In 1972, the company was acquired by Lucky Stores, a Dublin, Calif.-based food chain. This began a period of expansion, which included acquiring Minnesota Fabrics, a 100-store chain, bringing the total of retail stores to 320. In 1987, Hancock Textile Company was spun off from Lucky Stores and changed its name to Hancock Fabrics, Inc. It also became a public company with the symbol HKF.



In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the retail fabric industry as a whole experienced massive unit expansion. This excess capacity, combined with a difficult national economy, resulted in several bankruptcies and hundreds of store closings and liquidations for many of Hancock's competitors.

In 2007, difficult times caught up with the chain. Hancock Fabrics went

into Chapter 11, but successfully emerged early in August 2008. Today the company operates 266 retail stores in 37 states and an Internet store at www.hancockfabrics.com. Through this Web site, Hancock has developed several innovative programs that outreach to young sewers. These have included a partnering with "Project Runway" to develop two online games. Hancock provided the fabric swatches and RoiWorld, who developed the games, designed clothing for The Designer Closet game. In four months, over 600,000 people played these two online games.



In 1996, Hancock became a St. Jude sponsor. Over the years, Hancock, its employees, and customers have raised well over a million dollars for the hospital. The Quilt of Dreams program, which began in 2002, was a mainstay of Hancock's support of St. Jude. In 2005, the Quilt of Dreams program was the ASG National Community Service Project.



Judging the 2010 Quilt of Dreams contest

The Quilt of Dreams program is currently on a mini break. However, the company and its employees continue to donate to St. Jude and the

retail stores participate as an outlet for St. Jude Dream Homes ticket sales. The company also hosts several donation periods in its stores for customers to contribute to this worthy cause.