

Batavia Chamber of Commerce

MADE IN BATAVIA
SHIPPED to the *World*

Drive-thru sensors, rain barrels and red worms

Company: Marsh Products

336 McKee
Batavia, IL 60510
630-879-8008

Founded: 1969

Employees: 17

President and CEO: Doug Marsh

Founder Dick Marsh, passed away
in 2006

Founded in 1969 by Dick Marsh, the company began with a drink dispenser sensor manufactured for McDonald's. The sensor technology fit Ray Kroc's passion for efficiency and the fast growing company asked Dick Marsh if he could design a sensor for making the perfect French Fry. The only problem was, McDonalds had no idea what the perfect frying temperature should



The Marsh family: Doug Marsh, Ruth Marsh, Kim Marsh Valentine, and Laura Valentine

be. So they delivered a truck load of French Fries to the Marsh family kitchen in Batavia, where Ruth Marsh, a college educated dietician, employing dependable test market experts of family and neighborhood kids, working through countless batches of French Fries, determined the perfect frying temperature. Dick designed the sensor and the rest, as they say, is history...Batavia history.

Today Marsh designs and markets an eclectic collection of products including drive-thru sensors, time keeping systems, rain barrels and red worm composters. They manufacture drive-thru sensors for McDonalds, White Castle, Burger King and others. The drive-thru sensor is an antenna like device that is buried in the pavement. When a car passes over the antenna, it activates a signal, or more recently a recorded message. The sensors are sold primarily through Panasonic and are shipped to the US and around the world.

The first drive-thru system was developed for McDonald's in 1978. Marsh business peaked in 1984, the year Ray Kroc died. 2009 was a very good year for Marsh Products, their best year in 20 years, according to CEO Doug Marsh,

benefitting from growth throughout the fast food industry.

The business was started by Dick Marsh in his garage on Old Kirk Road in Geneva. In 1975 he moved the company into the old Batavia Dairy building on McKee Avenue just west of Batavia Avenue. At their peak the company had about 117 employees. Now most of the manufacturing and assembly is outsourced. The company currently has 17 employees. Many of the employees, like Linda and Debbie, have been with the company 25 years or more. Kim (Marsh) Valentine, educated in ecology, markets "repurposed" wine casks as rain barrels; and odorless red worm composting systems. Both products are available at Marsh products on McKee.

Three generations of the Marsh family currently work in the business including Ruth, wife of deceased founder Dick Marsh, son Doug, daughter Kim, and granddaughter Laura.

They still sell directly to White Castle and local installers. Most McDonald's in the country use the Marsh Products drive-thru sensor.

ignite!
A Bright Future for BATAVIA
COMING MARCH 26



Annual Mayor's Breakfast sponsor, Michael George of Aliquot Capital, chats with Mayor Jeff Schielke at the Chamber's Annual Mayor's Breakfast. In an upbeat presentation, the Mayor emphasized the large number of current and potential development projects downtown, along Randall Road and across the rest of Batavia.



At the recent Chamber Harvest Celebration, Dallesasse Award recipient, Jeanne Harms, joins previous winners, Kurt Miller of Thornapple Landscapes (2008) and Britta McKenna of Batavia MainStreet (2007).

Plan to attend the Chamber Annual Awards Dinner

The beautiful Lincoln Inn Banquets will serve as the dramatic backdrop for the Chamber's signature event—the Annual Awards Dinner. Please plan to attend this gala, black-tie optional event during which we will honor the 2009 Citizen of the Year, and announce the winners of the Ole Awards. The evening features the high school Chamber Orchestra and includes dancing and a wonderful silent auction.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 5 pm – 7 pm **2nd Tuesday Meet & Greet**

Join us for our quarterly Prospective Member Meet & Greet...dubbed the "2nd Tuesday". These are always great fun and a wonderful opportunity to meet some extraordinary people. We gather at Chili's Bar & Grill, 491 N. Randall Road

Thursday, Jan. 21, 8–9:30 am or 10–11:30 am **Marketing Mastery with Laurie Guest**

Back by POPULAR demand...the one and only Laurie Guest! Three years ago, Laurie rocked the Batavia Chamber with her engaging style and no-nonsense approach. This year, she will get your employees stirred-up about finding new business.

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2010 **Joint Business After Hours with Geneva Chamber, 5– 7 pm**

Join us for a wonderful joint after hours event with the Geneva Chamber of Commerce...it's always fun to meet colleagues from other Chambers! Visit the beautiful facilities of Delnor Glen Senior Living, St. Charles

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 11:30 am **BWIB Lunch with the WNBA Chicago Sky CEO, Margaret Stender**

Margaret Stender, President/Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Sky, brings 22 years of extensive leadership experience in business development, operations, management and marketing for high-profile brands and business units of Fortune 100 companies. We'll hear from Ms. Stender at Lincoln Inn Banquets.

Thursday, Feb. 25, 8–9:30 am OR 10–11:30 am **GenerationSpeak with the nationally renowned team of Kizer & Bender**

Do you speak the same language your customers and employees speak? Do you understand generational nuances? At work, do associates from different generations work well together? It all comes down to understanding people from different generations, with different values and thoughts, different motivations and sensitivities. You'll meet each generation and learn how they differ from one another.

Friday, Feb. 19, 7:30 am **Eggs & Issues—US Chamber Update with Ben Taylor**

Do you know what is going on in Washington? Are you prepared for the impact of possible new legislation? Ben will give us an overview of the political landscape, highlight issues most likely to impact your organization and answer questions about the future of business-related legislation.

(For more information on any of these events, or to register, visit BataviaChamber.org)