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In work and life, Horst Engineering CEO Livingston pedals to success



HORST Engineering CEO Scott Livingston participates in various athletic events including “cyclocross,” which involves off-road bicycling

By Keith Griffin

Scott Livingston’s business accomplishments are many.

Chief among them is being the third-generation president and CEO of privately-held Horst Engineering.

The East Hartford-based contract manufacturer specializes in making precision-machined components and assemblies for aerospace and other high-technology industries.

The company, which turns 75 in 2021, is in the midst of building a new headquarters at 141 Prestige Park Road in East Hartford. Horst will consolidate its three existing Connecticut locations at the 7-acre site.

Tucked into the plans for the 100,000-square-foot facility are a private bath and shower for Livingston. It's not a vanity project; the space is a necessity.

Why? Well, Livingston commutes to work like few others. He pedals the 14 miles via bicycle from his Bolton home almost daily. After those treks, he needs a place to clean up and prep for what are consistently long days shepherding a workforce approaching 150.

Consider this fact: As of mid-December, Livingston, 48, had pedaled 5,200 miles in 2020. The average driver puts 13,500 miles a year on the odometer. In effect, 40% of the time most people are ensconced in their vehicles with cooling and heating controls just an arm's length away, Livingston is out on two wheels in all types of weather.

But he's no mere two-wheel commuter. Livingston is also into a sport called "cyclocross." He describes it as a "steeplechase" for bikes. It's a fall sport that involves cycling off road and clearing various hurdles.

"The muddier the better," he said.

Livingston and his company are involved in all types of cycling.

Team Horst Sports was established in 1997 with Horst Engineering as its main sponsor. It's a dedicated road-cycling team composed of New England-based riders.

It now focuses on a variety of disciplines including: road and gravel cycling, cyclocross, mountain biking, trail running, road running, triathlon and adventure racing.

All of his biking accomplishments would be impressive but for Livingston it's not enough. His two-wheel adventures are just part of what he undertakes with his two feet. Along with his wife whom he dubs the "real Energizer bunny," Livingston partakes in ultra-distance trail running.

These are no gambols through the woods. The couple's goal is always FKT, or fastest known time.

"We tackle trails throughout Connecticut, running them as fast as possible over various terrain," he said.

So, how does the Livingston family enjoy vacations? Just as one might expect: more endurance challenges. Specifically, running from New Hampshire to Connecticut. It was a "vacation" that took years to plan and execute, Livingston said.

As Livingston describes it, in July he and his wife Debbie hiked to the 3,165-foot summit of Mount Monadnock at Monadnock State Park in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, and then ran to Chittenden Park on Long Island Sound in Guilford. Their route included the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in New Hampshire and the New England Trail in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

They covered more than 242 miles with more than 41,000 feet of elevation in just under 5.5 days. Sleep was less than four hours a night and the Livingstons carried everything they needed (with some items stashed along the way to ease their burdens).

"I stop short of calling it fun," Livingston recalled in an interview. "It's an adventure. People can't fathom what we do."

He's gotten his son and daughter involved in the family fitness commitment, too.

"We're so lucky our kids are along for the ride, whether they like it or not," he said.

Not all activities are fast and energetic, though. After 25 years without one, Livingston acquired a TV during the pandemic.

"We include the kids in our activities. I think that's why we felt guilty and bought them a TV," he said.

Livingston said finding the right work-life balance isn't always easy.

"I work a lot," he said. "If it wasn't for commuting by bike [and sometimes running to work], I wouldn't get to exercise. I squeeze it in."

Healthy living

Something else Livingston squeezes in is a commitment to the environment. Horst Engineering is part of the 1% for the Planet coalition, made up of businesses that contribute at least 1% of their annual sales to environmental causes. Its mission is to "build, support and activate an alliance of businesses financially committed to creating a healthy planet."

Further adventures await Livingston. He plans to run the more than 825 miles of the Connecticut Blue Blazed trails, sponsored by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. "I'm doing it a little bit at a time," he said.

He's also committed to making his employees healthy by embracing F3: fit, form and function. The new Horst Engineering headquarters will have a fitness trail.

A recent Veterans Day celebration involved a pushup competition that somewhat surprisingly Livingston didn't win.

“We had three women do over 200 pushups. I did 51,” he admitted with a laugh.