

# **TruPar: Lifting Their Business to New Heights**

**BY EARL BUGAILE** for the Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Tom McDonnell could very well serve as the Washington County Economic Development Department's official spokesperson. The Founder, President and Owner of TruPar America Forklifts from Bentleyville certainly speaks well of being a part of the county's business community, and it's the language many potential developers like to hear.

"We were looking for a place that was accessible to the Interstate highways, and also where we could find a favorable tax climate," McDonnell said. "We had been doing business in Allegheny County, and when they imposed a seven-percent sales tax, we had to pass it on to our customers, which was something we no longer wanted to do. I found this building that gives us 35-thousand square feet, and the property tax here was half of what a building the same size in Allegheny County would have cost me, and the cost of the building itself was what we felt was the right price.

This was everything that we needed. It's the perfect building and location for us." That was in 1995. Today, TruPar America Forklifts serves a client base from all over the United States, Canada and Mexico, and employs 35 people at its National Headquarters at 160 Wilson Road in Bentleyville. It also has sales representatives based in all parts of the United States.

"When we first opened here, there was only a hotel and a fast-food restaurant," McDonnell recalled. "The region has certainly grown around us." McDonnell has been the guiding force behind TruPar America since he began selling industrial parts to businesses such as the former Volkswagen of America plant in New Stanton. One of his earliest success stories was expediting the delivery of fuses for Volkswagens forklifts that had broken down and would have caused the plant to therefore have closed temporarily. Not only was he able to secure the parts deliveries overnight, he also picked them up at the airport and delivered them personally at 5am the next morning.

It is that touch of personal service McDonnell says makes TruPar America Forklifts stand apart from other dealers.

TruPar, which is short for "truck parts" is the region's exclusive dealer for Clark Fork lifts, which are considered to be one of the premium brands in the industry. They provide rentals as well as reconditioned forklifts for sale as well as parts and service.

"Over the past few years there have been dozens of off-brands and low-end forklifts coming on the market. We wanted to represent the best and most well-established products available." McDonnell said "Clark forklifts represent a wide range in terms of what they offer the user." The companies that TruPar America serves expect the best. The Bentleyville headquarters ships products to Fortune 500 companies, as well as those with one lift. The customer list includes companies such as General Motors, Ford, Dollar General and US Steel.

"Anyone who has a warehouse or has to load or unload a truck needs a forklift," said Michael Bucci, General Manager of TruPar America. "Our customer base includes municipalities, retail outlets, coal mining, food service, distribution centers, and just about any company that receives and makes shipments. Every tractor trailer truck you see on the highway has been

loaded with a forklift and will be unloaded with a forklift." Bucci noted that forklifts have been around since 1917, and the first one was invented by Clark.

McDonnell said TruPar is in a position to work closely with its customers in terms of financing and pricing. The company offers full-lease maintenance programs and has the ability to meet any of our customers needs.

‘Our biggest asset is that we are a first-generation, family-operated business," McDonnell said. "I’m here everyday, and not only do the employees see me, but the customers are able to talk with me directly about their concerns or questions. My cell phone number is on my business card, so they know that I am available to them if they need me." "We have always strived to maintain superior customer service," said Bucci. "It also includes quality maintenance repairs, and significant savings on parts and labor. With our competitive rates and trained technicians, TruPar America has been a one-stop shop for our customers." Additional information is available on the TruPar Americas website at <http://www.truparamerica.com/> or by contacting Mike Bucci or Tom McDonnell at 724-239-2220