



I.D. Booth, Inc. Celebrates 150 Years of Service, Innovation, and Community Leadership

Family-owned Elmira NY business marks 150 years supporting Upstate New York's trades and communities

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150 Years of I.D. Booth, Inc.: A Legacy Forged in Iron, Service, and Community

What began in 1875 as a modest "Heavy Hardware" store on Railroad Avenue in Elmira, NY is now one of New York State's longest-standing family-run wholesale suppliers. As I.D. Booth, Inc. celebrates its 150th anniversary, it reflects not only on its humble beginnings but on a legacy of innovation, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the communities it serves.

A Foundation in Iron and Grit

Irving Denman Booth, born in 1843 in Candor, NY, founded the company at age 32 after gaining experience as a hardware clerk in Elmira. A trailblazing entrepreneur, he recognized the needs of a rapidly industrializing region and stepped boldly into the opportunity. Launching "The Jobbinghouse of Irving D. Booth," he supplied nails, horseshoes, tin plate, wire, and window glass—the building blocks of a growing region. Within three years, I.D. Booth expanded into a new brick facility at neighboring 611–613 Railroad Avenue. This was a time before electricity (which arrived in Elmira in 1883) or automobiles (first seen locally in 1889). By 1914, the company had incorporated under the leadership of his son, Irving Dennison Booth, marking the beginning of a six-generation family legacy. The corporate headquarters at 620 William Street, Elmira, NY was constructed in 1925 and continues to serve as the company's central hub to this day.



Generations of Leadership, One Vision

Over 150 years, the Booth family has weathered wars, economic downturns, three fires, and natural disasters including floods, blizzards, tornadoes, and hurricanes, all while embracing change and innovation. Key leaders include:

- **John S. Booth (3rd generation)** – purchased the business in 1958 and led regional expansion. When John S. Booth started working at I.D. Booth, the salesmen traveled by train.

- **Peter S. Booth and J. Seeley Booth Jr. (4th generation)** – modernized operations and entered new market sectors.
- **J. Walter Booth and John S. Booth III (5th generation)** – continue to lead operations and sales today.
- **John Hunter Booth (6th generation)** – joined in 2024, ensuring a bright future for the firm.

Built by Employees, Backed by Community

Reflecting on the company's legacy, J. Walter Booth remarked: *"Our staying power truly comes down to our incredible team and the wealth of knowledge they bring every day."*

I.D. Booth is not just a company—it's a family of more than 140 employees, many of whom have served for decades. Their dedication, product knowledge, and unmatched service have made I.D. Booth a trusted partner to contractors, municipalities, and institutions across the region.

"It's not just a job—it's a place where your work matters, your family matters, and your name means something," says long-time employee Julie Ayres, who has worked at I.D. Booth for over 32 years.

The company fosters a "family-first" culture, where employees are encouraged to attend to family needs and be present for their children's sports games, concerts, banquets and academic, LEGO, or robotics competitions. This philosophy reflects the Booth family's belief that strong families make strong communities.



For over a century, I.D. Booth has published and distributed a large wall calendar each year—featuring a new photo of dogs or birds at the top, a tradition that has become a favorite among customers.

“Even our competitors hang them in their stores,” says J.

Walter Booth. *“We*

ship them across the country every year, and customers specifically request them. It’s a small thing that’s become a big part of our identity.”



Economic Impact

I.D. Booth has also forged multi-generational partnerships with customers and suppliers—some lasting more than 50 years. The company’s reputation for responsiveness, resourcefulness, and deep product knowledge has made it a preferred supplier throughout Upstate New York and Northern Pennsylvania.

With over 140 employees and 11 locations, I.D. Booth contributes significantly to the economic vitality of nine counties in New York State. Its continued reinvestment in local talent, infrastructure, and supply chains anchors the trades and service sectors across the Southern Tier, Finger Lakes, and Western New York.

The company also launched specialized divisions for steel, chemicals, and steel fabrication. In 1988, it entered the electrical wholesale market. Booth Electric Supply now accounts for one-third of total sales. By the 2000s, I.D. Booth added four branches through the acquisition of Harris Supply. Showrooms for kitchens and baths were introduced in three locations, beginning in Elmira in 1963.

I.D. Booth has been recognized by the New York State Senate, multiple Chambers of Commerce, and multiple industry associations for its contributions to economic development, workforce stability, and community service. I.D. Booth was awarded 2016 Affiliated Distributors U.S. Member of the Year for Performance Under \$10 Million. In 2022, it was named Napoleon's New Distributor of the Year.

A Culture of Community Support

Community involvement has always been core to the Booth identity. Founder Irving Denman Booth was vice president of the Board of Trade, an alderman, a fire commissioner, and a director of Arnot-Ogden Hospital. He also helped start the Elmira Country Club in 1897. His son, Irving Dennison Booth, served as president of the Association of Commerce, was a director of Chemung Canal Trust Company, and co-founded Ward LaFrance Truck Company with his friend A. Ward LaFrance to manufacture commercial vehicles.

John S. Booth and J. Seeley Booth Jr. continued this civic tradition through steady community presence, job creation, and quiet generosity that helped shape Elmira's infrastructure and economy. That spirit lives on today:

- I.D. Booth actively supports youth and adult soccer, hockey, and other youth sports in its branch communities. Irving Denman Booth began the Booth family's affinity for sports as an avid golfer, while his son Irving Dennison Booth was captain of the baseball team at Mercersburg and a track star.
- The company has supported area arts and music, including regional choirs and festivals.
- Employees are encouraged to serve as youth sports coaches, community volunteers and on local boards of directors.
- J. Walter Booth co-founded the Eldridge Park Preservation Society, restoring the historic carousel in 2006 after decades of dormancy.
- John S. Booth III served as a board member of the Wellsville, NY Chamber of Commerce, contributing to local business development and community engagement.
- The Booth family has long supported the Chemung County Historical Society. Dr. Arthur W. Booth, son of founder Irving Denman Booth, was one of its founding members in 1923.
- Peter S. Booth helped form one of the first national buying groups for plumbing and heating supplies, Interco (later Omni). He also coached youth hockey, supported LPGA

athletes during the Corning Classic, founded the Amateur Hockey Association in Elmira, and was a talented painter whose art supported many local charities.

- One former elementary school in Elmira carried the Booth name—the Arthur W. Booth School, which served Elmira students until 2004 and was named after Dr. Arthur W. Booth, a nationally recognized surgeon.
- In addition to their business leadership, the Booth family has shared a long-standing passion for wingshooting and conservation. Over the years, they have been dedicated supporters of Ducks Unlimited, promoting wetland preservation and responsible habitat management, and have actively participated in the Ruffed Grouse Society to help protect upland bird habitats. Their commitment to conservation reflects the family’s enduring values of stewardship, tradition, and community responsibility. J. Seeley Booth Jr. served as president of the Elmira-Corning Chapter of Ducks Unlimited and J. Walter Booth was chairman of the Ruffed Grouse Society’s local chapter.



Resilience Through Adversity

In 1972, Tropical Storm Agnes dealt a half-million-dollar blow. Peter S. Booth, then a company leader, famously worked 18-hour days and even slept in his office with a shotgun to guard against looters. The company recovered and expanded.

Moving Forward with Innovation

I.D. Booth introduced computers in 1991. Between 2021 and 2024, it implemented a new ERP system, handheld RF scanners and tablets, improving inventory control and delivery logistics. The newest generation embraces automation and digital tools to better serve a growing customer base of engineers, contractors, universities, and public agencies.

“Adopting new technologies has never been about chasing trends,” says John S. Booth III. “It’s about staying aligned with our customers’ needs and making it easier for our team to deliver excellence every day.”

A Rare Legacy

While over 90% of U.S. businesses are family-owned, only about 3% survive to the fourth generation. I.D. Booth is now in its sixth. From a Railroad Avenue storefront to a regional powerhouse, its success lies in service, family-driven perseverance, and enduring community ties.

The Booth legacy is built on more than inventory and invoices—it's built on respect, hard work, service, and stewardship—values passed from one generation to the next like blueprints for both business and life.

Here's to 150 Years—and the Future Ahead

As it celebrates this milestone, I.D. Booth, Inc. remains a testament to what a family-owned American business can be: resilient, adaptive, generous, and deeply rooted.

Built By Family, Trusted By Generations

From the Booth family to yours: thank you for 150 years of trust.



Built By Family, Trusted For Generations

About I.D. Booth, Inc.

I.D. Booth, Inc., founded in 1875, is a sixth-generation, family-owned distributor of plumbing, heating, electrical, steel, and industrial supplies. With 11 branch locations and a central distribution center across Upstate New York, the company offers over 30,000 products, expert

sourcing of hard-to-find parts, and custom solutions for older systems. I.D. Booth is dedicated to quality, innovation, and providing unmatched service and reliability to contractors, builders, municipalities, and homeowners.

For media inquiries, additional photos or images, or to set-up interviews with management, please contact:

Cindy Jarvis

ciarvis@idbooth.com

607-733-9121 ext. 525

idbooth.com

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