

## Company Profile

### SprinkGUARD, LLC

In March of 2009, Head Coach Matt Hunsberger was busy assembling the first ever women's basketball program for Holy Cross College in South Bend, Indiana. What he didn't know was that a costly sprinkler accident to their new athletic facility would have far greater an impact on his future than the temporary loss of his new program's courts.

The college administration had commissioned a local engineering firm to devise a way to ensure that a broken sprinkler head, from a renegade soccer ball or any other random situation, would never happen again. It wasn't until June that the college would receive the first prototype; to the utter dismay of the athletic director, what was delivered were steel "laundry size" baskets that weighed over 200 lbs. each and would cost the college over \$2,500 per cage. It was during the discussion of what was just delivered between the athletic director and Coach Hunsberger that the inspiration for the first SprinkGUARD was born. Matt said, "I looked up at the running track where these things were supposed to go and I just saw it!" Having grown up around his dad's business as a mechanic, and with some experience with metal fabrication himself, Matt envisioned a cage on legs that would be held with u-bolts like on an exhaust system at his dad's garage. After some calls to his brother, a fabricator for over 20 years, Matt presented a prototype of his own to the college officials within two weeks, and they loved it. The college ordered 38 of Coach Hunsberger's design and contracted him to do the installation as well.

During the Holy Cross project Matt began to take a serious look at this idea for a new sprinkler head guard. And so, the process to forming what is now SprinkGUARD evolved. Matt started his journey into an industry that was completely new to him. The initiation into design patents, NFPA code and standard, and variation in sprinkler designs and applications were just a few of things he had to pour himself into, while breaking into this heavily-regulated industry.

With the encouragement of fire marshals and various indus-

try professionals along the way, SprinkGUARD continued to develop products that would attempt to meet a glaring need within the industry.

Along with its commitment to meet various challenges in sprinkler head protection, Matt and his team have maintained their conviction to keep SprinkGUARD a part of American manufacturing's need for new business development. The allure of overseas manufacturing is an obvious financial advantage; however, the sense of responsibility that the company has to do its

part within a struggling economy far outweighs the monetary advantages to this group.

From its first major purchase by the University of Notre Dame, with FM Global's letter of approval in December of 2011, and its UL testing and completion in October of 2012, SprinkGUARD has since then quoted well over 28,000 units and has become the number one listing on Google searches for sprinkler head guards. The customer base has grown from not only universities and athletic facilities, but to motels, food distribution, construction, even residential property owners. And with customers like Phillips 66, Walgreens, and Walmart, just to name a few, SprinkGUARD is quickly growing into the vision that Matt Hunsberger has for his business. With the launch of their latest product designed to be integrated into new suppression systems, Matt anticipates that SprinkGUARD's business will more than double in 2014.

Amidst the uncertainty of the American financial climate, there appears to still be room for dreamers. An entrepreneur and a thriving new business were the metamorphosis of a coach and a random accident. But if you were to ask Matt Hunsberger, it was simply providence.

For more information contact: Matt Hunsberger, SprinkGUARD, LLC, 16100 Branchwood Lane, Granger, IN 46530, (877) 274-7976 ext. 501, [matthunsberger@sprinkguard.com](mailto:matthunsberger@sprinkguard.com), [www.sprinkguard.com](http://www.sprinkguard.com).

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