

# William Barnet & Son, LLC



**Bill McCrary**  
Chairman, National Council  
of Textile Organizations  
Chairman and CEO,  
William Barnet & Son LLC

## THE LAST STITCH

**NCTO Chairman  
Bill McCrary says  
the U.S. textile  
industry is resilient.**

**A**s an almost 50-year veteran of the U.S. textile sector and as a current industry CEO, I'm proud to say I work for a truly amazing industry.

During my tenure, I've seen the best and worst of times; and right now, I'm excited because the U.S. textile industry is healthy and growing. The recession of 2008-09 set us back, as it did many other industries. Since that time, however, we have experienced growth and then stability in output, investment and employment.

Besides amazing, if I had one other word to describe the U.S. textile industry, it would be resilient, as the story of my company, William Barnet & Son LLC, illustrates.

Founded in Albany, New York, in 1898, Barnet's guiding principles are safety, quality, productivity, cost, and customer satisfaction. The company is proud of its 120 years of continuous business, remaining privately-owned, and keeping continuity of leadership within the family from generation-to-generation.

Initially a wool reprocessor, Barnet's roots are in recycling post-consumer by-products back into processable fiber for a second life. The company moved south to Spartanburg, South Carolina, in the early 1960s when there was great growth in synthetics. Because of the company's varied capabilities, Barnet began contract manufacturing for major chemical companies, and later began a significant trading business covering all generic types of fibers, yarns and polymers worldwide.

Today, Barnet has a global footprint, with operations in the Americas, Europe, and Asia producing a wide variety of world-class recycled and first-grade products. The company also does contract manufacturing and has a fiber trading and distribution business.

Like Barnet, the resilience of the U.S. textile industry is amazing. We are survivors. We are creative. We have great leadership and wonderful loyal associates in the industry. Just as importantly, we enjoy what we do and take pride in the diverse customer base we serve.

We are an industry in balance with respect to supply and demand. The U.S. textile sector is vertically integrated and can make and supply almost any textile product to compete with any other country in the world ... but we do it right here in the United States with guaranteed quality and on time delivery. Case in point, the U.S. textile production chain had \$78 billion in shipments and more than \$28 billion in exports in 2017.

In fact, the dynamic within the U.S. textile industry is so strong that we are attracting foreign direct investment from all over the world — Mexico, the European Union, Japan and even China. It is clear, major offshore competitors now view U.S. textiles positively and as a good destination for investment. The opportunities are to be prudent managers of these recent investments, both domestic and foreign, and to continue to grow our sector in the largest consuming nation in the world.

Moreover, the industry is critical to America's national security because we manufacture more than 8,000 different textile products used by our soldiers, sailors and airmen in executing their mission to keep our country safe.

Drilling down further, we are amazingly innovative as we continue to differentiate ourselves from the lower cost basic commodity fibers, yarns, and fabrics made in other parts of the world.

A great example of innovation is the formation of the Advanced Functional Fabrics of America (AFFOA) institute in 2016. A \$320 million U.S. Department of Defense, state, and privately-funded collaborative effort headquartered near the Massachusetts Insti-

tute of Technology, AFFOA is focused on commercializing the next generation of smart textiles. Backpacks that communicate; and washable, stretchable clothes that can power electronic devices and monitor your health will be hitting the market in upcoming years.

U.S. textiles also are amazingly adaptable. Textiles are not just apparel. Textiles are an industry that supports and supplies various sectors fundamental to our standard of living, including food, clothing and shelter. Each sector is constantly trying and finding ways to make products using differentiated materials. Carbon fiber is seeing especially explosive growth, with more than \$2 billion in capital investment announced in Alabama and South Carolina in recent years. These products are finding applications in the automotive market, aviation and a host of other areas.

Likewise, there are many new fiber, yarn and fabric products today that have characteristics unheard of years ago ... conductive, color-changing, antimicrobial, temperature-regulating, recycled ... the list is long.

Another area where U.S. textiles have made amazing strides is in sustainability. As well as being good stewards of the environment, in certain instances, there are also significant cost savings to be had when recycled materials are used. I have always said if quality is good, and cost is equal to or less than first grade raw materials, then there is a bright future for recycled materials. Considering that most companies are now designing textile products with a circular lifecycle in mind, the latest recycling technologies are helping to make U.S. textiles more sustainable and competitive than ever.

Finally, the U.S. textile industry has been amazingly engaged in an intensive outreach effort in Washington, and with the public. Thanks in part to the NCTO-led "We Make Amazing" industry rebranding campaign and the enhanced relationships built with policymakers, we have seen an improved perspective from our government. We are grateful that key federal officials now acknowledge the importance of our industry, and to a reasonable degree, cooperate with us on critical policy issues, including NAFTA modernization and other trade matters. It is clear globalization and expanded trade must benefit all parties, or it doesn't work. In that light, NCTO is working closely with the U.S. government to strike a proper balance with respect to textiles.

As my 2017-18 term as NCTO chairman concludes, I'm excited about going to work tomorrow in the world's most amazing, resilient textile industry. We have a bright, prosperous future and I can't wait to see things unfold. ☚

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