

GREAT GRIZZLY TIMES

#25 December 2017



A Message from the President



Fireworks Production Changing... Again!

Just when you think you might have figured out what is happening the Chinese government has their idea of what they expect the producers in China to do. Maybe you haven't heard but many factories have closed in the past 18 months. The remaining factories have to pay a stipend to the closed factories as compensation. Pricing has risen as a result of this and other factors.

Long time producers still expect labor, weather, and governmental regulations to all have an effect upon continued production. Production schedules are ever changing to these factories, and we should expect delays based upon all these factors. If it doesn't happen this season consider yourself very lucky. It is inevitable that at some point demand will exceed supply. Will this be the year is the only question?

We have cultivated relationships with our suppliers for decades to assure ourselves that in limited supply situations we'll do better than most. The Chinese New Year holiday will officially begin on February 16, 2018. Most real production will not resume until at least the 1st of March. By the time you get this newsletter there will be only 60 days of manufacturing time before halting production for the Chinese New Year holiday. Hopefully they will overachieve during this time period. After the holiday is over all bets are off as to how steady and how fast the factories can finish the remainder of the orders for the US market.

Every year is different; it's simply wait and see. Hopefully we'll get lucky!

Sincerely,

Richard B. Shields

President

What's Inside

A Message from the President	1
News from Kurt	2-3
Featured Products	4
A.J. at PGI	5
Nicole's Thoughts	6
Announcements	6
Update from Steven	7
Need to Know Info	8

- Certificates - Roll Call - Industry Events

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Don't forget our website, where you can check out videos and descriptions of your favorite products!

www.greatgrizzly.com

News from Kurt

31 Hours



Hello everyone and thank you for taking time to browse our newsletter. I'm excited to share with you a glimpse as to what I encountered on my recent trip to China this past October! Some of you may be surprised to find out that it was my maiden voyage to the land of fireworks, and I must say it was long overdue. NCI has maintained a presence in China for over 30 years relying on both regular trips taken by our owner Richard Shields, as well as regular visits to the fireworks production areas by our China Agent Freddie Chen.

After this past season I and our National Sales Director Steven Irvin expressed the desire and interest to go and Richard was happy to send us. We settled on an 11 day trip for this initial visit and I must say we used every possible minute to get the most out of our time there. We scheduled several factory visits which allowed us to view many different types of settings in which the different categories are made. We got around viewing everything from fireworks production including cakes, artillery shells,



This work station has all of the necessary components to pack chemical components of an artillery shell.

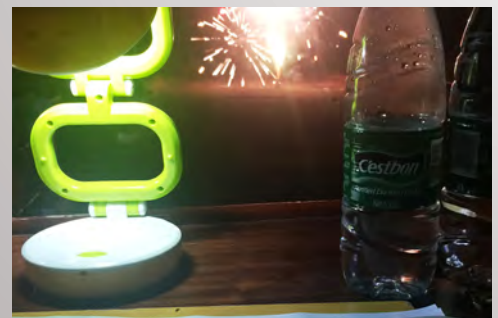


A prep technician places timing fuses and bottom plugs in paper tubes.

fountains, roman candles, novelties, & sparklers to component production which consisted of paper tubes, fuse, shell casings, compound plugs & special effect inserts. Beyond that we visited a fiberglass tube factory, a printing factory, and the logistics consolidation warehouse which gave me a new perspective of how it all comes together. I've had over 10 years of experience in this industry now and always prided myself on a great understanding of how our products came into being. While a lot of what I witnessed wasn't necessarily a surprise, it was a "connecting the dots" experience for sure.

Some of you may or may not know that the fireworks production environment has been and continues to experience rapid change in China. The government is committed to closing about 80% of the factories that produce fireworks by the year 2020. This process has started a few years ago and continues to be an initiative for the future. With that said there is a difference between closing 80% of the factories and cutting 80% of the production capacity. The feeling is that the larger factories that have a record of safety and will invest in new safety requirements will grow and absorb the production of the smaller factories that may not necessarily have the means to invest in the new requirements. There is no question that the supply chain is shrinking, and they are also subject to long periods of production bans due to weather and political influence.

The most important insight that I came away with from my travels was that our relationships with our supplier partners are key. This is not to say that I didn't think it was important before, but in this changing environment it is going to be essential to have some level of importance to the companies that are producing the merchandise. The good news is this has always been a core business principle of NCI to create and maintain those relationships so that when supply gets tight, we will have some priority to get goods over others. We have a lot of customers that rely on us to have the products they need in a shrinking window of time and you can rest assured,



My point of view from one of our China product demonstrations. Sometimes we viewed over 100 items per night.



A freshly printed sheet of 3" tube covers.

it is our priority and responsibility to do everything in our power to deliver on that promise. Our relationships remain strong and our reputation as a partner in China is excellent.

To wrap up, I just want to touch on my enthusiasm for some of the new products that we will bring you in 2018. Most of you know that I am an enthusiast and very passionate about fireworks. I've had the pleasure to be able to bring in products that I believe are second to none, but I must say I am extra excited about the offerings we will feature for 2018. Steven Irvin and our Southern Region General Manager AJ Burns have jumped in and helped to select some truly amazing fireworks of all varieties. There are a few new effects coming out of China that were only available in display fireworks before, but now they have figured out how to efficiently produce them for consumer products.

Stay tuned to our social media page, YouTube channel, and website for updates as we will be unveiling them the second they are unloaded and available for sale! As always it has been a pleasure to share some insights with you and I hope that this article

was informative and enjoyable. For those wondering about the title of this article, it was inspired by the amount of flight time we accumulated round trip during our travels to & from China. As always if you have any further questions I am available to discuss fireworks any time! To those of you that are ramping up for New Year's Eve sales I wish you the best of luck and also hope that everyone has a safe & enjoyable Holiday Season.

Best Wishes,

Kurt



Shipping yard in China

If you loved the documentary Passfire, you may want to check out Passfire the Series: Season 1. It is available to purchase on Amazon or to stream on Vimeo.

New Great Grizzly Products



NEON PARROT - THIS 25 SHOT 500 GRAM CAKE WILL LEAVE YOU MESMERIZED! AGGRESSIVE VOLLEYS OF VIVID NEON PEONIES RIP OPEN THE NIGHT SKY. ENJOY YELLOW, BLUE, RED, PINK, SILVER, GREEN, BLUE, & PURPLE STARS THAT TRANSITION INTO A 5 SHOT FINALE OF CHARCOAL DAHLIAS WITH CRACKLING STARS. SIMPLY AMAZING!



DOUBLE CROSSED - 16 SHOT DOUBLE BREAK CAKE THAT PRODUCES 32 POWERFUL BURSTS. EFFECTS INCLUDE MULTI COLORED BROCADE, PEONY, AND PALMS WITH TAILS AND OUTSTANDING GLITTER. YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!



TROPICAL THUNDER - SILVER FLASH MINES TO RED BREAKING JELLYFISH. SET THIS CAKE APART FROM THE REST, THEN RED AND BLUE PEONY WITH STROBE AND BROCADE TAILS LIGHT UP THE SKY. FINALLY A VOLLEY OF 4 SHOTS END WITH A FINALE YOU'RE SURE TO REMEMBER.



ROSE GRENADE - THIS 500G CAKE IS ONE OF A KIND WITH 6 POWERFUL RED PISTIL BREAKS AND 3 SHOT FINALE WITH THE STUNNING RED ROSE SPRAY™ EFFECT. IMPRESS YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WITH THE MOST UNIQUE FIREWORK OF THE NIGHT!



LION'S SHARE - GET YOUR SHARE WITH RED STARS TO SILVER GLITTERING WILLOWS, GREEN STARS TO RED GLITTERING WILLOWS THEN RED, GREEN, YELLOW, PURPLE, BLUE, AND ORANGE PALMS. NEXT, 4 SHOTS OF RED AND SILVER GLITTERING WILLOWS. ENDS WITH A 4 SHOT FINALE OF DELAYED CRACKLING CHRYSANTHEMUMS WITH RED, GREEN, AND YELLOW STARS.



B.A.S.E. MILITARY CAKE SERIES - THIS ASSORTED CASE OF 500 GRAM CAKES FEATURES A VARIETY OF EFFECTS AND DURATIONS THAT ARE SURE TO SATISFY. WHETHER THE CONSUMER IS LOOKING FOR A DURATION CAKE WITH SINGLE SHOTS AND A FINALE, OR AN AGGRESSIVE VOLLEY CAKE THIS SET OF DEVICES INCLUDES BOTH TYPES. WITH 25 SHOTS EACH AND DURATIONS UP TO 35 SECONDS, THIS MILITARY-THEMED SERIES FROM GREAT GRIZZLY IS A TRUE VALUE AND A SURE BET TO KEEP CUSTOMERS COMING BACK!



PLANET ASSORTMENT - 4 ASSORTED VARIETIES OF INEXPENSIVE MULTI SHOT ITEMS. EACH CAKE FEATURES 9 SHOTS OF ASSORTED EFFECTS AND VARIABLE TIMING. THE REASONABLE COST OF THESE DEVICES WILL BE SURE TO MAKE THE PLANET ASSORTMENT A BEST SELLER!



SPIDER MONKEY - SEA-BLUE STARS WITH GOLD GLITTER, RED DAHLIA WITH GOLD GLITTER, AND PURPLE DAHLIA WITH GOLD GLITTER.



YETI - TIFFANY BLUE ACCENTS PINK, BLUE, AND PURPLE DAHLIA WITH SILVER STROBE AND GOLD STROBE MINE.



POWER BALL - RED, YELLOW, AND PURPLE PEARLS WITH WHITE PINE NEEDLES AND CHRYSANTHEMUM CRACKLING. A FINALE OF WHITE STOBING PEARLS WITH TITANIUM CRACKLES.

New Packaging



The Predator XL artillery shell 12 pack underwent a product update in 2017 and a slight packaging change. Due to its overwhelming success and increased demand we stepped up the packaging again on the 12 pack Predator XL and are introducing a 6 pack clam shell and a uniquely designed 24 pack. With the newest packaging and sizes this unstoppable canister shell line is sure to earn shelf space in your stores in the upcoming season!



Fun at PGI

A phone call just days before the beginning of the Pyrotechnic's Guild International (PGI) led to one of the best experiences in my short Pyrotechnic career. Steven Irvin, NCI's National Sales Director, contacted me while I was sitting in our Great Grizzly Fireworks Superstore in Atlanta Georgia. His only question, "Do you want to go to PGI?" My response, short and sweet, "Heck yes"

After a plane ride to Cincinnati and a 5AM car ride to Muncie, Steven and I were loading up his camper. We had a grueling 15 hour drive ahead of us and I made sure to bring my pillow. Our travels to Fargo were full of excited conversation and anticipation, after years of hearing about it, we were both on our way to our first PGI convention.

I had often heard about the PGI from fellow pyro friends that are regulars at each convention. As I awoke the next morning, their stories became reality; I was in for 4 days of pyro heaven. I quickly learned that the PGI is a friendly and extremely knowledgeable group of hobbyist. Each person that attends PGI has their own fireworks story and they love to share their experiences. The stories range from stage hands that worked on rock concerts, to the guys that built North America's largest shell, a 48" behemoth that weighed in at over 1,100 pounds. I highly recommend you Google it!

The PGI membership also ranges from 2nd or 3rd generation pyros that attend the Junior Pyrotechnics Association up to Pyro Masters with over 50 years of experience! During this weeklong event there are dozens of how-to classes, a trade show, and even a manufacturing area. In the manufacturing area you can watch the mad scientist build by hand the fireworks they set off that night. Ask politely and you could wind up with your hands dirty rolling stars for an 8 inch shell!

All in all, the PGI is a fantastic group of people from all walks of life that share a passion for fireworks. Steven and I learned an

incredible amount in four short days, and made friendships that will last a lifetime. I've learned our industry is one built upon friendly competition. Whether you're competing with the store down the street or against another 8 inch, 4 break canister with a bottom shot... Everyone is gazing skyward in awe at the end of the night.

For more information, check out pgi.org you will find the link to become a member of the PGI. There are also links to the dozens of courses and how-to classes at each convention.

NCI will be in Mason City Iowa for the next PGI, we hope to see you there!



A.J.

Firsts for Nicole



Hello all! What a whirlwind of a year this has been for me! I'll start off by mentioning that I am officially a first time home owner. One big lesson I learned: never buy a house or move during busy season. I decided to do both and wouldn't suggest it.

I attended my first National Fireworks Association (NFA) convention in September. The convention was in Erie, PA. At first I didn't believe had much to offer, but to my surprise it turned out to be a really lovely area! We stayed in an Airbnb in Findley Lake, NY. It's an adorable lake town that I suggest visiting if you happen to be up that way. Getting back to NFA... We were able to set up a booth this year and we hope to do so at future NFA events. I believe it went over well and it allowed us to meet face to face with many of you and allowed me to put a face with a name. I love this industry, our

customers, and look forward to meeting more of you!

In addition to attending NFA I traveled to sunny San Diego, CA to the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) convention. This was my first APA experience and my first time on the west coast! We attended the general sessions and gained a lot of information about everything happening in the fireworks industry. The roadside inspection work shop covered what officers look for during inspections, the different types of inspections, and other useful information that applies to our drivers. There was a go-karting event for NGAP (Next Generation of American Pyrotechnics). We went to K1 and raced go-karts, which was so much fun! I really enjoyed getting to connect with other young people in the industry that attended and I hope to see more of them in the future. Friday evening we dressed up and took a bus to Mission Bay where we enjoyed a lovely fiesta style dinner and a riveting 8-minute fireworks show put on by Pyrospectaculars.

To wrap things up I had a year of many firsts: First time home owner, first NFA convention, first APA meeting, and my first time on the west coast! 2017 has been very good to me, both personally and professionally, and I look forward to seeing what 2018 has in store!

Nicole

Announcements

In September some of our staff visited Erie, PA for the 2017 NFA Expo. It was the first time in a few years that NCI had a booth set up at the expo. There were some familiar faces and several new ones that we were able to meet with face to face. We hope to see everyone again next year. Perhaps the biggest attraction at the expo (according to some) was our newly wrapped show trailer. North Central has had a trailer for a number of years and we decided to kick it up a notch with the graphics. It's loaded down with our best products so we can bring a mobile showroom right to our customers.

For inquiries please contact our National Sales Director, Steven Irvin @ 1-800-800-BANG or steven@greatgrizzly.com.

Credit Card Authorization Policy

North Central Industries, Inc. will be enforcing our credit card authorization policy in order to protect our customers as well as ourselves from fraudulent transactions. For in person transactions be prepared to show ID. Phone transactions will require a Credit Card Authorization Form as well as a copy of your ID. These can be faxed or emailed. If you have any questions prior to ordering please contact Kim Reynard, Office Manager, in order to prevent a delay in shipment.



Update from Steven



Kurt Cowgill, Steven Irvin, & Freddie Chen

I have been focused heavily on our 2018 and believe it or not our 2019 new items. We are taking great strides to make sure we are bringing in the newest effects, innovative shot patterns, and top notch packaging. Most importantly we are keeping our price points in mind so that we can offer competitive items in every price point in every category.

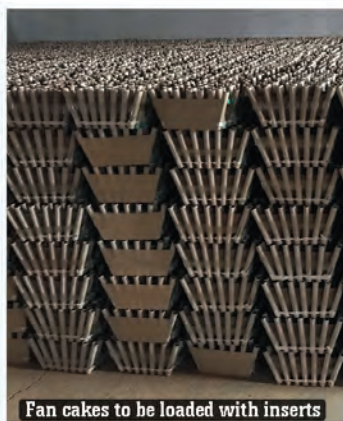
While in China we watched demos each evening from 1-3 factories totaling around 700 items during our trip! We continue to compile all of our notes so we can bring our customers the best of the best. We are excited to bring several new effects and product concepts for the 2018 season and are hard at work pushing the envelope for 2019. Our trip inspired so many new and exciting ideas. Being in the factories and seeing each type of firework being manufactured was invaluable in coming up with new ways of creating new products.

When it comes to packaging myself and our team have been working hard on 40 new Great Grizzly items artwork while also starting to redesign a few of our long running staple items that could use a facelift. Be on the lookout for some really outstanding styles and designs! You can sneak a peak right here in our winter newsletter.

Steven



Demo night with a great supplier, Over 60 items!



Fan cakes to be loaded with inserts



Black Powder storage



Miles of black match fuse



4" Canister Shells ready for their wrapper



Mountain side fuse factory



Powder Line



Are you covered?

NCI offers additional insured certificates for product & premise!

Contact Nicole for more information.
nicoleb@greatgrizzly.com

Indiana Firework Distributors Association

The IFDA works to support your industry, become a member today!

Contact Executive Director
Steve Graves (800)535-7477
www.friendoffireworks.com

Pyrotechnics Guild International

2018 Convention
North Iowa Events Center, Mason City, IA
Aug 4-10th, 2018
For more information on PGI:
www.pgi.org

National Fireworks Association

NFA Expo, Wichita, KS
Sept 10-14th, 2018
For information on NFA's Expo:
www.nationalfireworks.org

American Pyrotechnics Association (APA)

2018 Winter Education Convention
Las Vegas, NV
Feb 6-8th, 2018
For more information call (301)907-8181 or
www.americanpyro.com

ROLL CALL! YOUR NCI STAFF:

Richard B. Shields

President/Owner - 41st Season

Kurt Cowgill

Operations Manager - 11th Season

Steven Irvin

National Sales Director - 2nd Season

Kim Reynard

Office Manager - 2nd Season

Nicole Burnett

Marketing Assoc. - 3rd Season

Angelic Wood

Customer Service Rep. - 3rd Season

A.J. Burns

General Manager, GA Div. - 1st Season

Charlie Phipps

Warehouse Manager - 32nd Season

Jack Miller

Production Manager - 29th Season

Brenda Said

Asst. Production Manager - 20th Season

Freddie Chen

China Agent - 14th Season