Diaper spells success
New Iberia company a hit with parents across the globe

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New Iberia — Tereson Dupuy is a woman who took a desire to find a way of protecting her baby from chronic diaper rash into an Internet-driven business that had $500,000 in sales in 2002.

Tucked away on Weeks Street in downtown New Iberia, Dupuy is the president of Mother of Eden, a company she founded to help sell Fuzzi Buns — which she calls the perfect diaper.

The company now has 16 full-time employees and the diaper is being sold in more than 60 stores and more than 10 foreign countries. Projections call for the company to break $1 million in retail sales this year.

Dupuy and Fuzzi Buns will also be the subject of an article in an upcoming issue of Money Magazine. Fuzzi Buns was granted a U.S. patent on June 17 of this year.

"Just the name is enough to start people laughing and talking," Dupuy said. "The name actually makes a lot of sense for what I was trying to do."

When her son, Eden, who is now 6, was born, he was subject to chronic and persistent diaper rash, Dupuy said. The chemicals in disposable diapers seemed to aggravate the situation, she said.

"I had to do something," said Dupuy, who calls herself a stay-at-home mom. "I started doing research and talking with a group of friends on the Internet."

It's more than just a group of friends, said Terry Dupuy, her husband.

"There's this whole underground culture of stay-at-home parents who are constantly exchanging ideas and talking about how they do things," he said. A comment he summed from one of them about fleece led to Fuzzi Buns.

The Fuzzi Buns is a diaper with a fleece insert, she said. The insert keeps the baby clean and dry and reduces the chance of diaper rash.

"Fuzzi Buns was introduced into the Internet community who were using cloth diapers and one customer turned into two, two into four and it just kept multiplying," Dupuy said.

All of the profits from those early sales were reinvested into Mother of Eden, she said.

"I did all of the sewing myself when this first got started," she said. "I am not the best sewer in the world.""

Dupuy said she had one class of sewing while attending UL Lafayette and "that was pretty much my experience with sewing and sewing machines until I took this up.

Her husband said Dupuy was making three or four of the diapers a day and new orders continued to come in through their Internet connections.

"At first, we kept everything in a back bedroom," Terry Dupuy said. "But, that got to be a bit much."

The closure of the Martin Mills plant gave Dupuy the perfect work force to draw upon, she said.

"I found people who were unemployed and had worked at the Fruit of the Loom plant working at gas stations or in fast food restaurants," she said. At first, she had only a couple of employees, and Mother of Eden was moved into a separate building.

"It just kept growing," Terry Dupuy said. "We are now producing more than 12,000 diapers a month, and I figure we will keep expanding."
Success

Dupuy said that since she began as a “work-at-home mom,” she feels very strongly about using her success to empower other women to grow their businesses while staying at home with their children.

Fuzzi Bunz are now being sold in Finland, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, New Zealand, France, Denmark and Ireland.

Still haven’t figured out that one yet,” she said with a grin and a shake of her head. “I’m a Louisiana business that can’t sell a product in Louisiana.”

Tresen Dupuy
President of Fuzzi Bunz

The best sales in the United States are in California and Texas, and the worst sales are in Louisiana and Mississippi, she said with a shrug of her shoulders.

At first, Mother of Eden tried five yards of fleece to make the handful of Fuzzi Bunz that were being made. Today, the company gets through 4,000 yards of fleece in a matter of weeks.

Dupuy said she has formed a strategic trade alliance with a company in China for the plastic part of the diaper.

“Tresen never really knew it would get this big,” she said. “It just seems to keep getting bigger and bigger. Make a better diaper and moms around the world will hear about it.”