

# TULSA WORLD

SERVING NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA SINCE 1905

(This is an update of an article originally published Oct. 25, 1999)



TOM GILBERT / Tulsa World

Bob Pool (right), Thermal Windows chairman, inspects window frames as employee Pedro Hernandez places them on a rack.

## SPOTLIGHT

*Thermal Windows, Inc.*

### Address

12805 E. 31st Street  
Tulsa, OK 74146

### Service

Manufacture, sales and distribution of energy-efficient windows and doors

### Management

Bob G. Pool, Chairman  
Dennis M. Lane, President

**Employees:** 150

**Established** 1980

## No pane, no gain

### Thermal Windows competes nationally

By Delbert Schafer  
World Staff Writer

Computer geeks may forget that Microsoft doesn't own a monopoly on the manufacture of windows. Tulsa-based Thermal Windows, Inc. does quite well, thank you, building and installing their custom-made windows and doors in homes and commercial buildings.

The company custom manufactures energy-efficient windows, sliding glass doors and terrace doors at their plant in Tulsa, Oklahoma. One of the few companies that makes both vinyl and aluminum windows, they distribute their products throughout the U.S.A.

"The only companies with equal quality are larger East Coast firms," said Bob Pool, chairman of Thermal Windows. "And we're catching up fast (in size), because our overhead is less."

The company has 150 employees. Operations move swiftly in their manufacturing plant, headquarters and showroom at 12805 E 31<sup>st</sup> Street

in Tulsa. They keep several crews busy installing windows throughout the Tulsa region. Two tractors with 15 trailers keep busy transporting products from coast to coast.

"We sell from Portland, Oregon to Puerto Rico," Pool said.

The company has experienced double-digit growth in most years. According to Dennis Lane, president and CEO of Thermal Windows, their commercial arm has grown rapidly, especially in sales to the Northeast, thanks to a national network of independent sales representatives.

Because Tulsa is home to Thermal Windows, area residents are served directly from headquarters by five salespeople who give free in-home estimates, as well as ten local installation crews. This full-service treatment is available throughout northeastern Oklahoma. The Oklahoma City region is covered by Thermal's sales and distribution center in Bethany.



TOM GILBERT / Tulsa World

Dennis M. Lane, president of Thermal Windows, shows off displays in the company's showroom.

Pool said the company employs three methods of distribution: installed sales direct to homeowners; contract sales to government agencies, general contractors and custom builders; and sales of custom-made frames to glass companies and others who provide their own glass and assemble the windows for installation on jobs. This last method is cost effective when it comes to competing for smaller jobs, and it allows the customer to use local sources of glass, Pool said.

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# No pane, no gain (cont.)

Thermal Windows generates \$20-\$30 million in sales revenue every year. Not bad for a business that Pool began in early 1980, relying on the credit generosity of his suppliers, after his former company, Aluminum Window Products, filed for bankruptcy.

"I thought it would be a one-man operation," Pool said of the company's founding. "I'd sell one day, manufacture the products, then go back and install."



Original location, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Tulsa (1962)

It soon became apparent his one-man band would grow to symphonic size. In 1982 he leased 4,000 square feet, later taking an additional 4,000 square feet for sales and administrative offices on 46<sup>th</sup> Street. An expansion of 15,000 square feet was leased for manufacturing in 1985. By the mid-90's, Thermal's operations filled 100,000 square feet. Growth continued, requiring additional expansion, until Pool decided to construct their current facility, which occupies nearly 250,000 square feet on 23 acres at 12805 E. 31<sup>st</sup> Street in Tulsa. "We want to have space to grow," Pool said. Clearly, such aggressive expansion plans should ensure that the company doesn't miss any windows of opportunity.

## A family tradition

Bob Pool's family has been in the window business in Tulsa since 1945 when

his father, Cal Pool, started distributing metal awnings and combination storm, sash and screen products.

Dennis Lane came to Thermal in 1989 after working for a small window company in Houston. He heard one of Pool's radio ads, so he inquired about a job. The two personalities clicked, and Lane began his rise up the company ladder.

Pool stepped away from day-to-day management of the company in 1990. He

If events follow Pool's succession plan, his family will remain active for years to come at Thermal Windows Inc., and his company will continue as Pool winds down his personal involvement.

While keeping fully informed about the company's activities, Pool spends most of his time in south Texas, where he and his wife Carolyn have a home next to their grapefruit ranch. This is the source of the delicious fresh grapefruit Pool gives away to the public around New Year's Day each year. He now spends about three days each month in Tulsa.

Bob Pool's 50-plus years of experience in the window industry began in 1958 when he joined his father Cal, who then owned and operated Aluminum Window Products. For the next 10 years, he worked side-by-side with his father. In 1968, his father retired, and Pool took over sole ownership and operation of the business. The recession of 1974/75 forced the company into bankruptcy. In 1980, Pool started Thermal Windows, and there's been no looking back.

Asked to share his secrets of professional success, Pool responded with down-to-earth business advice. "It takes hard work," he said. "Get up early and stay late. Take care of the customer first."

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remains active as the company chairman, but knows that management succession is assured in Lane, with operational succession in the hands of plant manager David Thoman.



Current Headquarters and Manufacturing Plant, Tulsa

### Corporate Headquarters & Manufacturing Plant

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