Gilpin and Company Named SBA Alabama 2011 Small Business Exporter of the Year

In 1963, Sandy Gilpin founded Gilpin and Company, which is the global leader in easy-open ends and other hard-to-find packaging closures. In 2005, Gilpin was joined by current CEO Paul McClure and in 2008 the two moved the company’s headquarters to Birmingham, Alabama.

Business for Gilpin and Company began to escalate once the company settled in Birmingham, but soon after gaining their footing, the U.S. financial system began to tank and showed few signs of coming back. The financial meltdown caused banks to stop lending, which threatened small businesses like Gilpin.

“Even though our bank was among the largest in the country and Gilpin has a strong balance sheet, additional credit was unavailable. Local banks don’t typically deal with foreign risk and thus weren’t lending,” said McClure.

Gilpin needed financing in order to take advantage of growth opportunities, so McClure turned to the Alabama International Trade Center (AITC) for assistance. Counselors at AITC were able to come up with a solution, which involved the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and First Commercial Bank, and Gilpin and Company was able to continue its growth curve, doubling in three years despite one of the worst economic recessions in history.

Gilpin has been honored as the SBA Alabama 2011 Small Business Exporter of the Year and continues to have a network of sales representatives in 14 countries and supplies customers in more than 40 countries, including China, Brazil, Australia, Japan and Mexico.