

Good News!



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Alix Kocher, general manager of Nielsen-Kellerman, shows off a Beijing 2008 Olympics T-shirt. Nielsen-Kellerman is the sponsor of the United States Rowing team.

County business makes a big splash in rowing

■ Nielsen-Kellerman developed a device to help rowers and now is sponsor of U.S. Olympic team.

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UPPER CHICHESTER — Nielsen-Kellerman may be a supporter of the 2008 Summer Olympics, but they act locally as well as globally.

The Delaware County manufacturer of Kestrel weather instruments and waterproof electronics has been sponsoring the U.S. Olympic rowing team for at least 12 years, although they've also designated a non-profit organization every month for the past two years.

"We do a lot," said Alix Kocher, general manager. "Because of the way our products are used, we are very connected to our customer. We see the opportunities to help."

The company has a policy of donating two percent of pre-tax profits to charitable causes such as Everest Climbing for a Cure, A Journey for 9/11, breast cancer research and Ducks Unlimited.

Nielsen-Kellerman was established in 1978 when two Xerox employees, Richard Kellerman and Paul Nielsen, created one device, now

known as the Cox Box amplifier, to be an amplifier, stroke meter and timer for coxswains.

The company recently was awarded Exporter of the Year from ThinkGlobal Inc., publisher of *Commercial News USA*, the official export promotion magazine of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Exports represent 36 percent of the company's total sales.

While the company's product is traveling far and wide, Kocher said she's staying stateside during the Beijing festivities.

"I'll just stay here and run a business," she said.

Nielsen-Kellerman's rowing sales manager, Frank Biller, will be making the trek in about a month as he's the assistant coach of the American team for the Paralympics, which start Sept. 9 in China.

"Frank is Swiss," Kocher said. "He looks for opportunities to travel."

She said Nielsen-Kellerman became a sponsor of the rowing team through its support of the U.S. Rowing Association, which is the national governing body as confirmed by the U.S. Olympic Committee.

The company provides the individual athletes with the ability to order their equipment at half-price and also provides the team with training electronics.

One such device is the Speed Coach XL, which allows a coach to determine how fast the shell is moving and how it's impacted by people, technique or rigging.

The team, which has been practicing in Princeton, N.J., will be competing at the Shunyi Olympic Rowing and Canoeing Park in Beijing.

"It has to be still," Kocher said of the water, although her equipment can handle the currents.

Locally, the company has also supported the Philadelphia Community Boathouse Initiative, which is a summer rowing program for 20 to 30 inner-city children.

"A number have gone onto college partly because of their participation in the program," she said.

The company also helped assist Loyola University after its boathouse was destroyed following Hurricane Katrina, but Kocher said much of the praise goes to a Connecticut company that paved the way.

With regard to the Games, Kocher said she will watch them on television and says the workers at Nielsen-Kellerman are anticipating the games, as well.

"A lot of our employees are from the area and they're excited that the stuff they built is being used there," she said.