

# Profile

Ready America is a great American success story that began with a woman who took an idea and turned it into a thriving business that now leads the field in emergency preparedness solutions. It all started in 1991 when Dran Reese embarked on a search for a product to protect her valuable crystal and glass figurines, as well as her husband's antique bottle collection.

Between rambunctious kids, energetic pets and the constant threat of earthquakes, part of everyday life in California, Ms Reese realized there was a need to find a way to secure fragile objects on display in her home. And when her collection of treasured Swarovski crystal animals was knocked over and shattered, she became determined to find something that would keep her breakable pieces in place, yet at the same time allow her to remove and relocate items at will.

After an exhaustive search, she eventually found a putty-like substance and took it to a chemist to have it made stickier and non-staining. The result was the original QuakeHold! Putty, an easy to use soft putty that is non-toxic, removable and reusable. It was also at that time that the brand name QuakeHold! was born.

The putty spawned a complete range of QuakeHold! earthquake safety fasteners for the home and office, including furniture and appliance straps to secure big-ticket items such as entertainment centers, china cabinets and wall units. TVs, computers, VCRs and DVD players can also be secured in place with the fasteners. Two more temporary adhesives, Museum Wax and Clear Gel, used for securing collectibles, crystal and glass breakables, were introduced a short time later, after which safety lightsticks were added to the mix.

Lightsticks have a myriad of uses such as an alternative source of light in power blackouts, natural disasters and roadside emergencies. They can also be used for outdoor activities including camping, boating and fishing. Once activated, each stick provides light for up to 12 hours. They are cool to the touch, more reliable than flashlight batteries and are safer than candles.

The safety straps and temporary adhesives are merchandised in California, Washington, and Hawaii through hardware stores and home improvement centers including the Home Depot, Lowe's and OSH, while the lightsticks are sold nationally through the Home Depot and Lowe's. In essence, QuakeHold! safety fasteners represent an inexpensive form of insurance for people wanting to safeguard their possessions.

New items have been added to Ready America's range of products including all-purpose Grab 'n Go Emergency Kits and an Emergency Power Station. The emergency kits contain enough essentials to sustain one person/two people for three days. The new Emergency Power Station is a hand-held unit that combines a flashlight, AM/FM radio, cell phone charger and personal alarm, all of which can be powered up by simply winding the built-in crank handle.

The company changed its name from Marlyco, Inc. dba Trevco to Ready America in early 2007, and at the same time it completed the acquisition of two other companies, Q-Safety and Fastening Solutions. Both companies were well established in the fields of industrial and commercial earthquake preparedness. As a result of the growth, QuakeHold!, QuakeHold! Industrial and Thumblock are all divisions of Ready America, which now has three separate sites throughout southern California with its headquarters in Escondido, CA. Sales representative firms work on its behalf, and its distribution network spans the length and breadth of the United States. The company also has accounts in Japan, Turkey, Canada and New Zealand.

QuakeHold! partnered with FEMA in 2001 on the 'Project Impact' pilot program in Washington State, and continues to work on disaster mitigation programs in conjunction with the American Red Cross, the California Earthquake Authority (CEA), the Southern California Earthquake

Center (SCEC), and the US Geological Survey (USGS). In 2005, it contributed editorial content to and was a financial sponsor of a new earthquake safety publication "Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country" that was jointly produced by the CEA, SCEC, USGS and FEMA.

The company again contributed to and sponsored a version of the Putting Down Roots handbook specifically developed for the San Francisco Bay Area in 2006, and was a member of the 1906 Earthquake Centennial Alliance, a group formed to commemorate events surrounding the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great San Francisco earthquake and fire.

Apart from its business operations, Ready America is an active supporter of the 'My Stuff Bags' charity program. The charity rescues children who have been abused or neglected and places them in crisis centers. Each child is given a My Stuff Bag to help with their transition into care, and Ready America supports the program by making donations for each bag. The program appeals to Ms Reese because as a mother, she understands the need to provide for children, and as a business owner she is in the fortunate position of being able to contribute to this worthy cause.

In line with its business expansion, the company has increased its penetration of retail markets with an emphasis on reaching the growing Hispanic population. Product packaging and instructions are in English/Spanish in order to reach a significant segment of the community that may not be as aware as it could be of the need to be prepared.

Ready America's mission is to help the community in general understand the need to be prepared, because preparedness is the best defense against earthquakes.