



## Uncle Lee's wins state technology award

By [Leigh Ann Tipton](#)

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Lee Fauntleroy's teenage son initially had to teach him how to do a search on the Internet.

Thursday, Fauntleroy's business, Uncle Lee's/Wing Supply, was awarded the 2007 Governor's Technology Award for Small Business for its innovative use of Internet technology.

Uncle Lee's/Wing Supply, a hunting, sporting goods and furniture store in Greenville, has seven Web sites that include forums, hunting-related articles, hunting dates and thousands of products for purchase.

"All the sites are interlinked," Fauntleroy said. "It's not just about having a Web site, it's about getting traffic to that site."

The businesses' local retail site is <http://www.unclelees.com>, and its main mail order Web site is <http://www.wingsupply.com>.

It also has search-based sites so that if a hunter tries to look for discount hunter supplies on search engines such as Google or Yahoo!, one of his Web sites is the first one that comes up. If one buys hunting supplies off Amazon.com, there's a good chance it's coming from Uncle Lee's. The company also drums up a lot of business through e-mail notification of sales and closeouts. The day after an e-mail notification goes out, Fauntleroy said there will be as many as 400 new orders for the closeout product.

Fauntleroy knew little about the Internet when he asked his son to teach him how to do a search about eight years ago.

"I looked around, and there weren't many retail sites out there yet," he said. He went to the local community college looking for a student interested in a career in computer technology and found Chad Walker. He offered Walker a job, working 20 hours a week

at the Greenville store and 20 hours a week from home. He encouraged Walker to earn a bachelor's degree at Western Kentucky University while working for him.

Walker helped develop Uncle Lee's Internet presence, redesigning software to fit the company's needs and developing comprehensive Web sites that can provide potential customers with information on hunting issues as well as products.

"We have the capability now of reaching out across the world," said Joey Steele, general manager and chief operating officer of Uncle Lee's. He said the company has had orders from as far away as Saudi Arabia and New Zealand.

Fauntleroy said the best part of using the Internet for advertising is the insight it gives into how his customers are reaching his sites.

"From our site we can see what they bought, how much they bought, what key words they're searching for," he said. "We know specifically how they're getting to us, and we can build on that. It's a marketer's dream."

Steele said mail-order catalog purchases had declined in recent years. Now, 80 percent of mail-order sales are through the Web sites. And mail-order sales combining catalog, phone and Internet sales have increased more than 20 percent in recent years.

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