

# Prairie View Industries, Inc.

By Russ Willcutt

*No matter where you might need it, this company has a line of portable and permanent access ramps that will help you overcome the obstacles you encounter.*

Sometimes a great idea comes first, and then the perfect application emerges a bit farther down the road. That's exactly what happened when Richard Allen, president of Prairie View Industries (PVI), came up with the design for a multifold aluminum ramp in the early nineties.



“He'd originally intended the ramp to be used for lawnmowers, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles, because we're located in a fairly rural area,” according to Kathy Waldrep, the company's CEO, “but at the first show he attended somebody mentioned that it would be perfect for someone in a wheelchair to carry along with them in their vehicle, which made sense. So he returned to the drawing board and made the necessary modifications and was soon able to offer the first version of our portable access ramp. And this is something that folds up like a suitcase, so people find it to be both very portable and incredibly helpful. While we do sell ramps for lawn and other outdoor equipment through our recreational products division—in addition to another division that focuses on food-service products such as carts, racks, and tables for restaurant kitchens—our access ramps for customers with mobility impairments represent the vast majority of our activities in that area.”

Located in Fairbury, Nebraska, PVI is a vital and growing operation, with some 80 employees occupying more than 135,000 square feet of manufacturing space. While it does not sell its products directly to the end user, instead working through a global network of stocking distributors—it currently has representatives in Denmark, Japan, Great Britain, and Australia, for instance—it will build custom-designed ramps for contractors building accessible homes.

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Still, within its line of stock ramps are found quite a variety of designs, including single- and multi-fold, panel, and threshold ramps, modular systems for homes and public buildings, and portable ramps for vans. In addition, there is a three-part video available for download from the company’s Web site which depicts all the details of assembling a modular ramp, as well as others associated with the portable ramp, featuring versions for both consumers and dealers. A catalog of all its access ramp designs can also be downloaded online. The company also manufactures a selection of bariatric ramps and shower platforms, among many other designs. Despite offering such a wide selection, Waldrep says the original multifold design is still one of PVI’s top sellers.

“These are aluminum ramps that can be folded and carried like a suitcase, and they come in a variety of lengths and weight capacities, so they’re perfect for wheelchair or scooter users to carry along in their cars so that they’ll be able to set them up quickly should they encounter an obstacle,” she says. “All of our ramps are made of aluminum with pinch-free hinges, which is really an important feature, and most of the portable models come with a non-skid material on the surface for safety, while some of the larger units actually have channels etched into them to provide traction.”

While PVI originated the multifold aluminum ramp, imitators have since sprung up, claiming to provide units of equal quality. “Not so,” according to Waldrep. “We are the only company manufacturing access ramps that has its products tested and certified by Underwriters Laboratories, and their procedures are very demanding. Our ramps that are rated at 600 pounds were actually tested at four times that weight, 2,400 pounds, so that provides our customers with a great deal of security when they’re using our products. There really is no substitute, in terms of quality and dependability.”

Those who market its products would agree. “Having been in the durable medical equipment and rehab technology industry for over 10 years, I’ve found that PVI has been an essential part of providing independence and mobility to our consumers,” according to Keith Davenport of Super Mobility. “Other companies have been put to the test, but none of them equaled PVI. From the most involved modular ramps to the simplest threshold ramps, PVI has fit the bill. Our ongoing relationship with their technical support staff has been nothing short of excellent. They’re a great company to work with, and we’ll continue to use PVI in all of our future ramp needs, and to recommend them to others as well.”

## Ramp Roster

*Bariatric Multifold Ramp*

*Bariatric Panel Ramp*

*Bariatric Threshold Ramps*

*Modular Ramp QuickBlock*

*Modular Ramp Systems*

*Multifold Ramps*

*Pet Ramps*

*Self-Supporting Threshold Ramps*

*Shower Platforms*

*Singlefold Ramps*

*Solid Ramps*

*Standard Threshold Ramps*

*Utility Ramps*

*Van Ramps*

As for the future, Waldrep describes Richard Allen as a creative individual whose mental wheels are forever turning, resulting in potential new lines such as lifts for mobility devices, among other possibilities. “We’re proud of all the products we manufacture, but with the access ramps in particular we know we’re providing something that will improve people’s lives, and that’s a good feeling for all of us here,” she says. “We will continue striving to create new products, as well as continually improving those that are part of our current lineup. Our goal at Prairie View Industries is to continue to break down barriers that stand between individuals with physical disabilities so that they can lead more productive and active lives.”

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