

CORNING, from A1

get a glass screen after carrying around an iPhone prototype in his pocket and finding its plastic screen marred by tiny scratches.

Isaacson says Corning CEO Wendell Weeks told Jobs about an ultrastrong glass that the company had developed in the 1960s but shelved because it never found a market. It was called Gorilla Glass, and Jobs wanted to buy as much of it as Corning could produce in six months.

Responding to the impatient Jobs' challenge, the Harrodsburg plant quickly went from making liquid crystal display (LCD) glass for products such as televisions and monitors to manufacturing Gorilla Glass for the first run of iPhones.

On the day the iPhone hit the market, Jobs sent Weeks a message: "We couldn't have done it without you."

Joe Dunning, a spokesman at Corning's headquarters in Corning, N.Y., declined to verify the details of Isaacson's account.

But since the book's publication, Corning has publicly acknowledged its relationship with Apple. It had previously been bound by a nondisclosure agreement that designers like Apple use to keep their competitors from learning too much about their operations, Dunning said.

"What we can now say is that we have supplied the glass for iPhones since 2007," he said.

Apple acknowledges its relationship with Corning, too. On its website, the company includes as an example of American jobs it supports: "Corning employees in Kentucky and

New York who create the majority of the glass for iPhone."

A Corning fact sheet corrects one minor aspect of the book's story. Gorilla Glass was not actually developed in the 1960s, it says, though the company drew on expertise it gained while experimenting with strengthened glass during that era.

Beyond Apple

While the Harrodsburg plant still churns out some Gorilla Glass, it does not have the capacity to meet worldwide demand, Dunning said.

The majority of Gorilla Glass is now made at Corning factories in Taiwan and Japan — closer to the electronics manufacturing that occurs in Asia, Dunning said. The iPhone is manufactured in China.

"If you have a component in that supply chain, it would make more sense if you had your plant right next to the next guy's plant and not 8,000 miles away," he said.

Gorilla Glass is now used in more than 600 devices, including smart phones, tablet computers and high-definition TVs, according to Corning. The company sold about \$700 million worth of Gorilla Glass last year, nearly triple the amount it sold in 2010.

"It is a real success story for us," said Casey Duffy, manager of the Harrodsburg plant.

While the plant churned out the first run of Gorilla Glass, Duffy said the real contribution of workers in Harrodsburg was reworking the processes to show how it could be done. In recent decades, as manufacturing has moved overseas, the Corning plant has remained "viable and relevant" because it has been the place where Corning's

scientists and engineers put their ideas, such as Gorilla Glass, into practice, he said.

"We certainly believe it is our lifeblood here," he said.

And while the majority of Gorilla Glass is made in Asia, its growth has meant jobs and investment in Harrodsburg.

The plant recently underwent a renovation that cost at least \$186 million, in part to boost production of Gorilla Glass. In 2010, Corning projected the investment would also mean 80 additional jobs at the plant — a mix of production workers and engineers.

Duffy said the plant is on the way to meeting that target, which would mean \$6 million in long-term tax incentives from Kentucky and from Mercer County. The plant currently employs about 400, he said.

Changing functions

From sand and other raw materials to the finished 5-by-6-foot sheets that are shipped across the Pacific Ocean, the glass is made in Harrodsburg mostly without being touched by human hands. Workers are in the background, such as the ones who monitor the robots that cut the glass and package it.

In that sense, the plant is an example of how American manufacturing is becoming more "advanced," with automation performing repetitive tasks that used to be done by unskilled workers, said Manoj Shanker, an labor economist with the Kentucky Office of Employment & Training.

For instance, being a "sheet glass operator" at the Harrodsburg plant means something much different now than it did 20

years ago, said Wayne Reinsmith, president of the local chapter of United Steel Workers, which represents about 240 workers there.

When Reinsmith began working at the plant in 1993, "we had five or six people" cutting the glass and moving it along in the process, he said.

Today's sheet glass operators "are really watching and servicing the robots," he said.

While that has meant fewer jobs for rank-and-file workers, it has also meant opportunities for them to learn such skills as operating machines, which earns a better wage, Reinsmith said.

Of the 80 jobs Corning expects to add at the plant, the average wage is projected to be about \$25 an hour — higher than the average wage in Kentucky of about \$18 an hour.

About one-fourth of those jobs will be engineers, while the remaining are production workers, Duffy said. A typical rank-and-file union worker makes about \$20 an hour, he said.

After a Hitachi auto plant with more than 600 workers, Corning's factory is Mercer County's second-biggest employer, said Gayle Horn, the county's deputy judge-executive.

Horn remembers when the plant made lenses for eyeglasses and binoculars. In the 1950s, young men who graduated from Mercer County High School could get a job at the plant and make a middle-class career of it, she said.

"Any citizen in this county is grateful to still have Corning as an industry ... when you think how many years it's been here," Horn said. "And now, it's like it has its second life — it's gone to high-tech."

PEOPLE, from A1

champion in the 1950s," Creech said. "He and I were teammates at UK. I had always been a runner, but, after college, at that time, people didn't run past college."

He said he remembers being with a class that visited a Veterans Administration Hospital and someone asked if running was ever used as a form of rehabilitative exercise.

"I remember the startled look at the suggestion, and the reply was something like, 'Why, some of these men are over 40 years old!' It was out of the question."

Creech was born and raised in Wilmore, educated — both undergrad and graduate school — at UK.

He worked as an English teacher, first at the now-defunct Kentucky Military School, which, he says, took staff and students to Florida each year to winter. He and his wife moved away and lived and worked in Michigan for 34 years where he earned an additional graduate degree. The couple raised their two sons, Steven and David, before retiring to Danville in 1998.

"I ran my first marathon here in town at 43 years of age," he said. "Coach Plumber's 5K."

He has run in other Danville events over the years but said one of the reasons he runs is because

he likes to compete — not lose.

"The ones here, at Constitution Square, start my age group at 65 and I can't compete with 65-year-olds. Now if they had a category that started at 70 ..."

Merideth is his "pit crew," he says and also the keeper of the plaques and letters of recognition and medals.

He and Merideth spend about two weeks each January in Florida centered around the "runDisney" events, including the "Walt Disney World Goofy's Race and a Half Challenge" that features not only a marathon but also a half-marathon the following day.

He has 15 marathons and many other races of shorter duration under his belt now with no plans to slow down.

"After I recovered from my surgery in 2005, I had my cardiologist talk to my wife, to tell her I could run marathons again," he said.

Creech is steadily pressing toward his goal to be running still at 99 years old.

"I want to die healthy," he said.

He has the support of a lovely wife and an active lifestyle and the protection of a gargoyles so he appears to be in pretty good shape to meet his goal.

"I am happier than I was the first year of my marriage, and I feel better than I have in 30 years."

DANVILLE, from A1

which could slightly impact taxpayers in the future, according to Coleman.

Danville operates on about \$20 million each year, roughly half of which comes from the state.

"Our district is not in this situation alone," Coleman said. "School districts are constantly under pressure to provide more and perform

higher with fewer resources."

Danville also has no textbook funding, compared to \$57,362 in 2009.

Coleman said that problem can be alleviated by relying on technology more than traditional books, but the district also needs to make sure there is enough funding to keep updated technology in classrooms.

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