

WYTHEVILLE ENTERPRISE

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AWAY FROM THE DAILY GRIND



AMANDA EVANS/WYTHEVILLE ENTERPRISE

John Silva chased the American dream right into a commercial kitchen exhaust system. Shown from left to right are Hoodz technicians Kyle Knight and Andy Tynes, daughter Robynne, wife Regina, John Silva and son John Wyatt.

Chasing the American dream

Man gives up white collar job to open own business, a branch of Hoodz

BY AMANDA EVANS
Staff

John Silva went from wearing a tie to work every day to wearing coveralls and a gas mask, scraping out globs of gunk and grease from commercial kitchen ducts in the middle of the night.

Some might call him crazy for making the choice to trade in his white collar cor-

porate world for a new business in a shaky economy. For Silva, though, it's living the American dream.

"Job growth in this economy is possible with small business," said Silva. "And if I can be a small piece of that here in Wythe County, it's worth it."

The son of a naturalized citizen from Ecuador and the grandson of a Scots-Irishman carpenter, Silva had a 14-year career with Sears, working as a Kmart manager all over Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and Virginia.

"I knew I wanted more — to be more," said Silva.

Last year, the 49-year-old decided to open his own branch of the national commercial kitchen cleaning franchise Hoodz out of his home in Rural Retreat. The business was incorporated in September, officially opened in December and on Jan. 2 did its first cleaning at Judy's Family Diner.

Silva said he had grown weary of weeks away from his family and the daily grind of the corporate world.

He liked his job with Kmart and made good friends, he said, but he was ready for a change. Corporate meetings, he said,

Hoodz

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always talked about how to cut costs, which inevitably looked at labor. Meetings now, he said, the talk is about efficiency and adding labor. He's looking to hire a part-time worker soon.

Silva's service area spans from Roanoke to Bristol, with portions of northwestern North Carolina. It's one of the largest of the Hoodz franchises.

Silva's wife, Regina, takes care of the bookkeeping and the administrative tasks. She said working with her husband has made them closer. The career change has also reconnected the family, she said. Daughter Savannah, 21, helps with marketing when she's home