

Business Spotlight: Ace ImageWear

National Transportation Week is recognized annually as a tribute to the men and women who, day and night, move goods and people throughout the United States via various means, such as our three local ports. Ports are this area's largest economic drivers, transporting a wide range of commercial goods as well as military cargo vital to the nation's defense.

The ports' impacts are obvious to anyone who does business locally, and our local ports support thousands of jobs in Southeast Texas. What may not be as obvious are the people behind the scenes who help the ports fill their vital roles, said Port of Beaumont Community Relations Coordinator Carol Gary. That's why the Port of Beaumont is celebrating those individuals who make sure our ports run like well-oiled machines.

"May 17 marks the first day of National Transportation Week," she shared. "We plan to recognize individuals who have gone beyond expectations in their job. Local men and women who work in the transportation industry will be recognized on our social media (during National Transportation Week from May 17-21).

"Without these individuals, our nation would come to a halt. In our search, we learned Eric Jackson, Customer Service Representative at Ace ImageWear, has not missed a day in 25 years! He is the nicest guy ever!"

Eric Jackson has worked in customer service in Beaumont for over 25 years without taking a single sick day, and clients like Carol love to see his smiling face when he walks through their front doors. Eric connects companies with uniform rental services, commercial dry cleaning services, janitorial and facility service supplies, like floor mats and restroom supplies, and even offers innovative ideas he often sees put to use. Eric works with Ace ImageWear at 735 Liberty Ave. in Beaumont, where he keeps clients looking sharp and helps them project the best possible "image."

"We mainly do uniforms, mats, floor matting, towels and aprons," Eric said of Ace ImageWear's services. "I do floor mats for the Port of Beaumont at the main

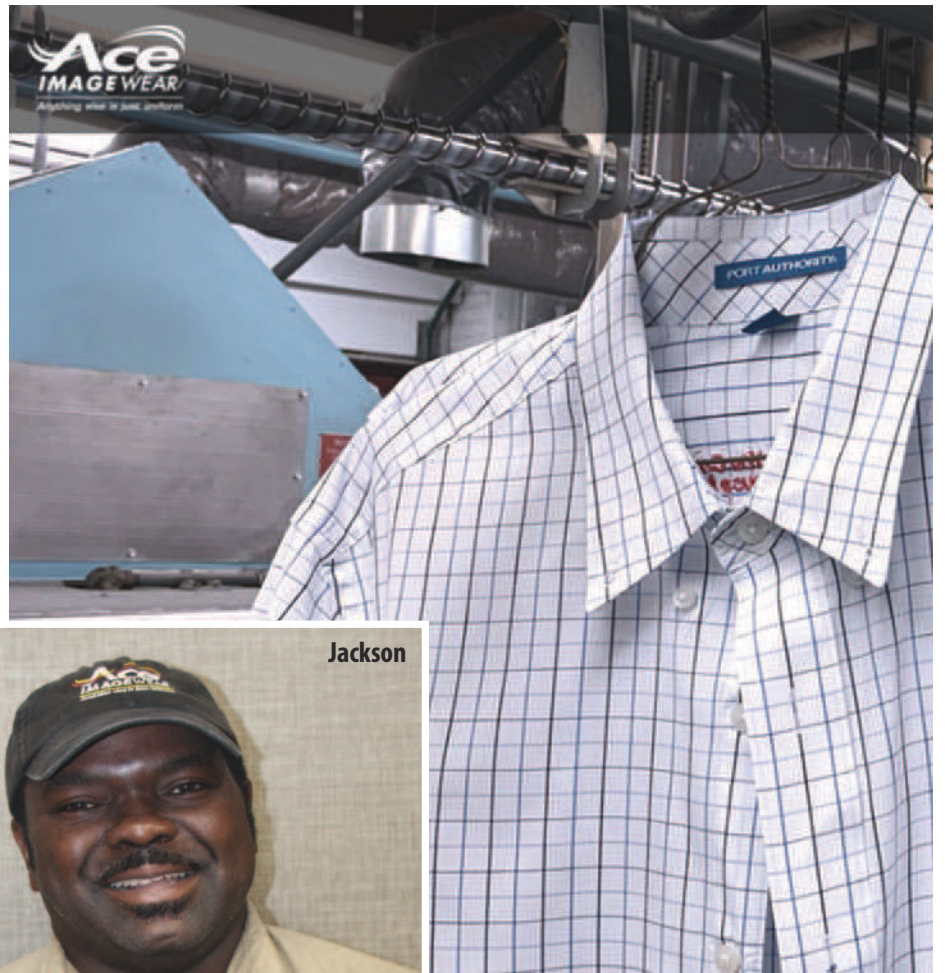
office, the Port entrance office and maintenance. I'm willing to say it's been at least 20 years that I've worked with the Port of Beaumont.

"I remember working with them back when we were still using all paper for our communications. We didn't have handhelds. We had a paper for cancellations, a paper for orders that we had to make, inventories. Everything was straight paper. So, I've been doing business with them way before we ever started using computers."

Beaumonters and Southeast Texans who've long traveled through downtown may remember Ace ImageWear as Shepherd's Uniform and Linen Supply, which was where Eric started his career about seven years after graduating from West Brook High School.

"I started working at Shepherd's on Feb. 9, 1996, and I was 25. I turned 26 the very next month on March 9," Eric recalled. Shepherd's was around for so long that just about everyone remembers it or at least knows someone who does, he estimates. "I've run into so many people over the years that said they worked there, or they had an aunt who worked there. I mean, it's amazing," he said with a chuckle.

The business was ultimately renamed Ace ImageWear, called "Ace" in honor of the most recent owner's grandfather, Ed Heilman, a salesman who used the nickname as his handle in the ring when he took up boxing to help make ends meet during the Great



Jackson

Depression.

Though the name of the business changed, Eric has remained and continues to impress clients with his positivity and creativity. He has helped numerous local companies come up with uniform and floor mat designs, and offers suggestions to any client who asks.

"They'll ask me, 'Eric, what do you think about this, that or the other?' And I will tell them," he explained. "Then, I'll

walk in later and all their employees are wearing clothing that was my idea. I think that's cool. It is so fulfilling when I walk into a place of business, and I see my fingerprint on this particular place of business. You walk in and you think, 'Yeah, that was my idea for them to wear that.'

"When you can go in and actually help someone with something they actually need, I think it's cool."

Have a design or logo you'd like to see on the floor mat in front of your business? Eric can help with that, too.

"Just give me the artwork you'd like to see, and I'll get it done for you," he said. "I enjoy it so much, and I love knowing that I'm helping somebody get something done that's important to them. It's important that you're getting to help them accomplish what they need done."

That's why Eric never misses work. He loves his job, and he loves his clients.

But what's his secret to perfect attendance?

"I hate to get biblical, but it's a lot of talking to the Lord and praying," he suggested. "There's some days that I've been hurt or really bad off sick, but you can't pay bills with your sick bed."

Call Ace ImageWear in Beaumont for uniform rentals, workplace mats and other supplies, and you're sure to get the great customer service Eric and others on the Ace team provide their clients. Ace is located at 735 Liberty Ave. in Beaumont. Call (409) 833-3333, (713) 678-7910 or toll free 1-800-877-3336 for service in Southeast Texas.



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