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Hart, an iconic name in U.S. skiing history, is the newest outdoor-industry company moving into Ogden.

The relocation of Hart Skis headquarters from Minnesota means only a half-dozen jobs for Ogden right now. But owners of the company famous for adding metal edges to skis ultimately hope to build their products in northern Utah.

"That is something we believe needs to happen for the [U.S.] ski industry to thrive," said Ogden Mayor Matthew Godfrey, who courted Hart Skis for a couple of years before Tuesday's formal announcement of the move.

"We're excited to have a partner that has that vision," he added. "Once it starts, it will start a wave of manufacturing, and will bring a huge number of jobs to our area."

Hart CEO Chris Farni said he does not expect much manufacturing in the United States soon. Although some Hart skis are manufactured in Washington and Colorado, most now come from Italy.

"Our vision would be to try to relocate U.S. production to Ogden, but that is an aggressive program that requires a lot of thought. Building skis is not something you take lightly," Farni said. "We hope to build more models in the U.S. when opportunities are correct and expertise develops."

Until then, Ogden and state economic development officials will be content to tout Hart as another example of Utah's growing outdoor recreation industry, while the company takes advantage of the state's geography to continue its re-emergence from decades of obscurity.

Hart became a dominant name in U.S. skiing in 1955 when Hartvig "Hart" Holmberg, brother Harry and a friend produced the first metal-edge skis.

The company peaked in 1967 when it sold 144,000 pairs, accounting for a 40 percent market share.

Although Hart still had some presence in elite competition circles, it slid into obscurity after being acquired by Beatrice Foods and going through other ownership changes.

But Hart has enjoyed a renaissance after major investments by Farni's brother, Jeff, and Holmberg's grandson, Bill. It is an official supplier of the Park City-based U.S. Ski and Snowboard team and sponsors eight freestyle skiers, including Vancouver bronze medalist moguls skier Bryon Wilson and 2005 world champion Nate Roberts.

Ogden's mayor liked what he saw in Hart when he first approached Farni in 2007 at a SnowSports Industries America trade show in Las Vegas.

"It's a brand people recognize, and they are seeing significant growth," Godfrey said. "Like most of the companies we've recruited, they were in a time of transition. ... They were growing and ready to be more strategic, and this was a better fit for them."

Farni said his management team accepted Godfrey's pitch after spending considerable time in Salt Lake City and Ogden the past two years.

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"There are a lot of tangible advantages to being in Ogden. We're within an hour of 10 premier ski resorts in the Wasatch Mountains," Farni said, and just four to eight hours by air from resorts between California and Colorado. "Logistically, it's an exceptional location. It's a move to better serve our emerging business in the West."

Farni said Ogden's concentration of outdoor industry companies was not a major factor in the relocation decision, although he appreciates how the presence of Amer Sports, Rossignol, Smith's and Goode could provide his company with spinoff business.

That realization is crucial to Riley Cutler, director of the outdoor-industry cluster in the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

"It's a good example of how Mayor Godfrey, once he got one or two ski companies, can work with them to bring the next one and the one after that. They're all constantly talking about what a good place Ogden is for the Alpine ski industry."

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Ogden lands another big ski name -- Hart

Hart Skis

» Company emerged in St. Paul, Minn., in 1955 with the first metal-edged skis, crafted by the Holmberg brothers, Hartvig and Harry, and friend Ed Bjork.

» By 1966, Hart sold 144,000 pairs of skis in one year.

» Consumer demand declined after that, although Hart skis still were used by elite skiers such as Olympic medalist Billy Kidd and became a favorite on the freestyle circuit.

» Notable skiers who used Hart skis in recent years include Olympic medalists Jonny Moseley (gold in 1998), Liz McIntyre (silver in 1994) and Bryon Wilson (bronze in 2010).

Ogden's ski industry

» Amer Sports Corp., whose brand names include Salomon, Atomic and Suunto

» Rossignol, which has a distribution center there

» Descente North America, a high-end apparel business

» Goode Skis, both water and snow

» Scott USA, maker of goggles

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