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# John L. Morris Bass Pro Shop

By M. Karen Hubbard

John L. Morris was born in southeast Missouri and grew up to be a big fan of fishing. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in business and economics. In 1971, his love of fishing led John to start a business selling homemade bait and worms in eight feet of space in his father's store in Springfield, Missouri. John named his shop the Bass Pro Shop. He did quite well in this location and in 1974, Bass Pro Shop sent its first catalog through the mail. It did not take long for Bass Pro to become the largest mail order sporting goods store in the world. A few years later, John started making boats with the name "Tracker Boats". In 1984, John began construction on the Outdoor World Showroom in Springfield, Missouri. The Outdoor World Showroom is a gigantic store for outdoor sports like fishing, boating, hunting, camping, etc. It is large enough to house streams, trees, a huge saltwater aquarium, a four-story waterfall and more.

John Morris' company has grown to more than thirty stores in nine states in the United States and one in Canada. The company launched a website in 1996 and has since become one of the largest online shops selling outdoor sporting goods. There are more than eleven thousand employees working for the company. The original store in Springfield is still the most famous location for the Bass Pro Shop company. It actually has become the biggest tourist attraction in Missouri. This means that people who vacation in Missouri visit John's store more than anything else in the state. More than four million people visit the store each year, and most of these visitors spend more than three hours in the store. That is a lot of time to spend shopping in one store! The company sells two billion dollars worth of goods every single year, and its mail order catalog is sent to more than thirty-four million people. That is nearly six times the number of people that live in Missouri.

Bass Pro Shop donates millions of dollars every year to conservation and restoration efforts of natural landscapes because John loves nature and knows that without it there would not be any outdoor sports. The company donates money to many different charities every year like the Muscular Dystrophy Association and education of people about the outdoors and responsible stewardship of nature.

John Morris and his company have made, and continue to make, a huge economic impact in Missouri and around the country