

Nutty Growth

How a simple idea for a quick snack became big business.

AS A VEGETARIAN FRUSTRATED by the lack of flavorful, on-the-go protein options, Justin Gold used to spend hours holed up in his kitchen, grinding raw peanuts into homemade peanut butter with a food processor. He would add ingredients such as blueberries, honey, or maple syrup in an attempt to create something tastier than grocery-store peanut butter. The extra ingredients caught on, and what began as a personal mission to snack well ultimately became something much larger: a multimillion-dollar company. Five years ago, Gold landed a national distribution deal for his Justin's Nut Butter, and today business is booming. In fact, in 2012, the company was named the second fastest growing company in Boulder County. "It's been a total roller coaster," Gold says. "But I'm very proud of where we're at." —NICOLE FREHSEE



1 JARS OF JUSTIN'S NUT BUTTER THAT GOLD EATS EVERY WEEK. GOLD SAYS HE ENJOYS EATING HIS PEANUT BUTTER WITH A BANANA OR ON TOP OF OATMEAL.

1.5 million POUNDS OF ALMONDS THE COMPANY USED IN 2012—MAPLE ALMOND IS THE BEST-SELLING FLAVOR—WHICH IS ABOUT EQUAL TO THE WEIGHT OF FOUR BOEING 747 AIRPLANES.



1.6 million JARS OF JUSTIN'S PEANUT BUTTER (\$5.99 TO \$9.99) SOLD IN 2012.



25 million

SQUEEZE PACKS—IN EIGHT FLAVORS, SUCH AS CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT AND HONEY PEANUT—THE COMPANY SOLD IN 2012. "THE SIZE LETS US BOLDLY GO WHERE NO NUT BUTTER HAS GONE BEFORE: ON HIKES, TO AIRPORTS, IN YOUR PURSE," GOLD SAYS. "IT'S EVEN BEEN USED BY ASTRONAUTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION."



160,000 POUNDS OF CHOCOLATE—AN INGREDIENT IN CERTAIN NUT BUTTERS AND IN JUSTIN'S ORGANIC CANDY BARS—THE COMPANY WENT THROUGH IN 2012.

\$25,000

SEED MONEY GOLD USED TO LAUNCH THE COMPANY AFTER DIPPING INTO HIS SAVINGS AND RAISING MONEY FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY.



500,000 POUNDS OF PEANUTS THE COMPANY USED LAST YEAR.

\$20 million

REVENUE JUSTIN'S GENERATED IN 2012. "WHEN WE STARTED, THE IDEA OF DOING ONE MILLION DOLLARS IN REVENUE SEEMED INSANE," GOLD SAYS. "\$20 MILLION BLOWS MY MIND."

NEWS FLASH

ALL ABOARD!

For nearly a decade, RTD's FasTracks project to extend light and commuter rail across the Front Range has slogged along at a frustrating pace, producing few tangible results. Not anymore. The brand-new **West Rail Line** is in its first full month of operation. What's more, the 12-station route from Denver to Golden was completed *eight months* ahead of schedule. (Yes, you read that correctly.) We can only hope the line to Denver International Airport is up next. rtd-denver.com