



VECTIS
AUTOMATION®

2026

VECTIS AUTOMATION: BUILDING A GREAT AMERICAN COMPANY

How a Loveland startup built a national brand by
investing in people, purpose, and place.



City of
Loveland
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



By:Lindsey Servin

Company Overview

When Vectis Automation launched in 2019, it wasn't backed by venture capital or outside investors — just a group of robotics veterans working out of a Fort Collins, Colorado garage who believed in doing things differently.



Today, from its manufacturing headquarters in Loveland, Colorado, Vectis builds collaborative robotic (CoBot) welding and cutting systems that serve customers across North America and beyond — from small job shops to Fortune 50 manufacturers.



Left Top: Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman | Left Bottom: Desiree Rich, Finance and HR Manager
Right: Vectis Team at FABTECH 2025

Vectis Automation's story begins with friendship and shared experience. Its founders — all former colleagues from Wolf Robotics — saw an opportunity to bring robotics to smaller manufacturers who struggled to afford automation. They started small, bootstrapped, and stayed focused on sustainable growth.

After several months aligning around a shared vision, the company officially launched in March 2019. Vectis was originally founded by four individuals — Doug Rhoda (Chairman), Josh Pawley (VP of Business Development), Drew Akey (President), and a fourth partner who later departed to pursue other opportunities. Today, Doug, Josh, and Drew remain the company's three principal owners, each playing a critical role in its success. From that foundation, the company quickly began building momentum.

From a Garage Startup to a Growing Team

What started as a small team working out of a Fort Collins garage has grown into a 35-person advanced manufacturing company headquartered in Loveland, serving customers across the United States and internationally.

Five years later, the company's reach extends to nearly every U.S. state, as well as customers in Canada, Mexico, and Australia.

"Our first headquarters was literally a garage with four people and an idea," said Desiree Rich, Finance and HR Manager. "Now we're a team of 35 supporting customers around the world. It's been an incredible journey."

This growth has been intentional — balancing innovation, customer demand, and team development every step of the way.

From the beginning, the team committed to a disciplined, organic growth model — one that prioritized sustainability and long-term success over rapid, externally driven expansion.

"We were profitable by our second year because of our disciplined, organic growth mindset," Doug said. "Profitability allows us to reinvest in the business and, most importantly, hire and retain the right people."

As the company has grown, Vectis has also been intentional about building a strong leadership foundation. While its internship pipeline remains a key strength, experienced leadership has been essential to scaling the business.

Several experienced leaders have joined the company over the past five years — bringing expertise in operations, engineering, and business development that has helped scale the organization effectively.

This combination of experienced leadership and emerging talent has created a dynamic, high-performing team.



"We're helping manufacturers make products better, faster, and safer. Collaborative robots make automation accessible to small and medium-sized manufacturers who could never justify traditional robotic welding."

Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman

Vectis Multi-Zone Setup

Solving the Skilled Labor Shortage – One Hire at a Time

Vectis' technology directly addresses one of manufacturing's biggest challenges: the shortage of skilled welders. But internally, the company has taken an equally thoughtful and strategic approach to building its own workforce.

"Our internship is a long-term interview. We pay well, we invest in you, and in return we're looking for people who are hungry, humble, and smart."

- Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman

Vectis partners closely with Colorado State University, Front Range Community College, and local high schools to attract and train students eager to learn advanced manufacturing and robotics. Many of the company's leaders – including Desiree Rich (Finance and HR Manager), Drew Akey (President), and Josh Pawley (VP of Business Development) – began their professional careers as interns themselves.

Every intern is paired with a mentor, and every team member plays a role in developing new talent. This mentorship culture has become part of the company's DNA.



Vectis Cobot, 2025

"Most companies ask, 'How do I hack it?'" But there's no shortcut to developing people. It takes patience and long-term commitment – and that's our edge."
Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman

Mentorship as a Competitive Advantage

At Vectis, mentorship isn't an HR program – it's a core business strategy. The company has built a culture where developing people is part of everyone's role, ensuring skills stay sharp, knowledge is shared, and team morale remains strong.

Vectis partners with Colorado State University, University of Northern Colorado, and Front Range Community College to recruit emerging talent, with an internship program designed not as a short-term role, but as a long-term investment in future leaders.

Interns are immersed in real work, mentored by experienced team members, and often transition into full-time roles – creating both continuity and strong cultural alignment across the organization.

"At first, we were trying to convince students to give us a chance," Desiree Rich said. "Now, candidates come to us because they've heard about the experience from professors, classmates, and former interns."

This "train-the-trainer" approach has become a defining strength of the company.

Mentorship at Vectis doesn't just benefit interns – it elevates the entire organization. Desiree shared that one of her first accounting interns inspired her to pursue her CPA license.

"I realized I couldn't help him reach his goal unless I reached mine," she said. "Now I'm more successful because of him. That's what this culture does – it elevates everyone."

Over time, Vectis has refined its approach by building a strong foundation of experienced hires while continuing to develop emerging talent.

Today, the company maintains a deliberate hybrid workforce model – approximately 75% experienced, full-time hires and 25% current or former interns – ensuring both execution and long-term growth.

This balance allows Vectis to maintain high performance today while continuously developing the next generation of talent for the future.

"We've learned that you need a strong foundation of experienced team members first. Then you can bring in interns, mentor them, and scale the culture the right way."

Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman



Vectis Cobot, 2025

Loveland: A Place to Grow and Thrive

Vectis' decision to locate and grow in Loveland has played a significant role in its ability to scale. Both Doug and Desiree agree that the city and surrounding region have provided the ideal environment to build a strong foundation for long-term success.

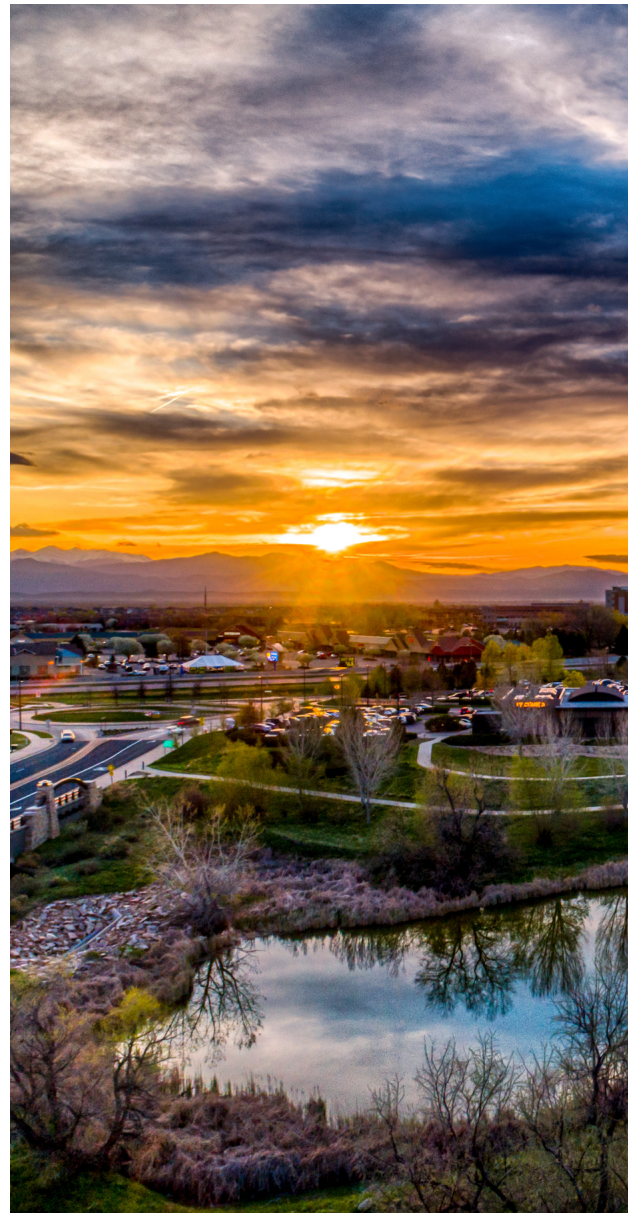
Loveland offers a combination of strategic advantages that support Vectis' continued growth:

- **Central location** with easy access to I-25 and the Denver metro area – ideal for serving national clients and receiving shipments
- **Strong talent pipeline** from nearby institutions such as Colorado State University and Front Range Community College, providing access to engineering and technical talent
- **Robust manufacturing and innovation ecosystem**, with peer companies, suppliers, and organizations like the Northern Colorado Manufacturing Partnership nearby
- **Collaborative, business-friendly community** where local government and regional partners actively support business expansion and workforce development
- **High quality of life**, offering strong schools, outdoor recreation, and an affordable cost of living compared to major metro areas

Loveland's supportive ecosystem has also made it easier for Vectis to find local vendors and suppliers, strengthening its regional supply chain and keeping production close to home.

"Accessibility makes Loveland special."

"Loveland is big, but it feels like a small town. Everybody knows everybody, and the connections here are powerful."



Promenade at Centerra, Loveland, CO

A People-Focused Vision for the Future

Vectis continues to grow at a steady, sustainable pace — focused on people, quality, and purpose over profit. Its leaders emphasize measured expansion and maintaining culture over chasing rapid growth, allowing the company to scale intentionally while staying grounded in its core values.

Without outside investment pressures, Vectis is able to grow at the right pace for its customers, its team, and its long-term vision — ensuring that culture and execution remain aligned as the company expands.



“We’re building a great American business.”

“I didn’t have to start another company — I wanted to. We’re building a great American business that helps manufacturers across the country and provides meaningful careers for our team right here in Loveland.”

- Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman

Rivers’s Edge Natural Area, Loveland

As Vectis looks ahead, the company plans to continue investing in automation technology, expanding its team, and deepening community partnerships that connect education with career opportunities — reinforcing the same talent pipeline that has fueled its growth from the beginning.

“We’re focused on growing the right way,” Doug said. “That means taking care of customers, investing in our team, and building something that lasts.”

“We want Vectis to be a company that lasts 100 years,” he said. “That means building it on people, not just profits.”

Lessons for Other Loveland Businesses

Vectis' journey offers clear lessons for other growing businesses in Loveland, grounded in what has worked for their own sustained success.

1. Invest in people early.

"Hiring smart, motivated people is the best investment you can make," said Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman. "Don't wait until you have a problem – build your pipeline now through mentorship and partnerships."

2. Leverage local partnerships. Vectis' relationships with CSU, FRCC, and local high schools have paid off in both recruitment and brand recognition.

"The community wants to help you," said Desiree Rich, Finance and HR Manager. "There are so many organizations in Loveland that are genuinely invested in your success – use them."

3. Take advantage of Loveland's ecosystem.

From suppliers to city partners, Loveland's scale, accessibility, and connected business environment make collaboration simple and effective.

"You can pick up the phone and reach the right person – whether that's at the City, a local manufacturer, or a supplier down the road," Doug said. "That accessibility makes Loveland special."

4. Build for the long term.

"Sustainable growth beats fast growth," Doug emphasized. "When you focus on values, community, and craftsmanship, everything else follows."

If there's one overarching lesson from Vectis' experience, it's the importance of proactive investment in people and relationships before challenges arise.



Vectis Cobot, 2025

"We're not just helping manufacturers address the labor shortage through automation. We're also growing our own pipeline of talent through mentoring and internships."
Doug Rhoda, Vectis Chairman

Sustainable, Values-Driven Growth

For Vectis Automation, success isn't just about technology – it's about people. By investing in mentorship, developing homegrown talent, and staying true to a long-term vision, the company has built more than a thriving business in Loveland. It has built a model for what sustainable, values-driven growth looks like when culture, capability, and community are aligned.

Rather than chasing rapid expansion, Vectis has intentionally focused on steady growth, strong execution, and maintaining its internal culture as the company scales. That approach has allowed the team to expand responsibly while continuing to invest in employees, customers, and the broader Northern Colorado ecosystem.

➞ Key Takeaways

Invest in People Early

Leverage Local Partnerships

Take Advantage of Loveland's Ecosystem

Build for the Long Term

➞ Vectis Automation Highlights

Founded: 2019

Employees: 35+

Headquarters: Loveland, Colorado

Leadership: Doug Rhoda (Chairman), Josh Pawley (VP of Business Development), Drew Akey (President)

Core Product: Collaborative robotic welding & cutting systems (CoBots) that help manufacturers make products better, faster, and safer

Talent Strategy: Internship-to-Career pipeline through CSU, FRCC, and local schools

Culture: Mentorship, patience, long-term investment in people, and shared accountability in growing talent

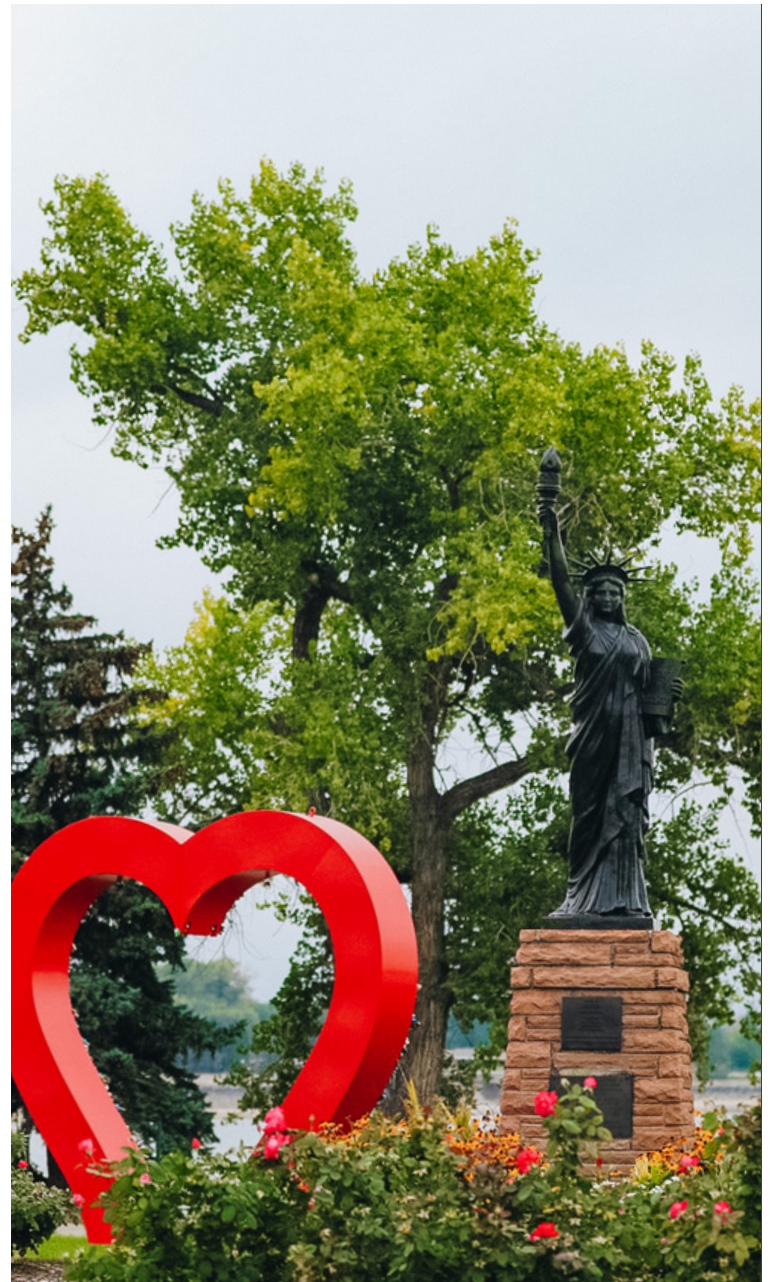
Loveland Advantages: Central location with access to I-25 and the Denver metro area, strong manufacturing and innovation ecosystem, collaborative business community, skilled workforce, and unmatched quality of life

Build What's Next in Loveland, the *Sweet Spot* for Innovation

Loveland is where innovation meets industry — a place where advanced manufacturers, engineers, and entrepreneurs turn ideas into scalable solutions. With access to a highly skilled talent pipeline, strong partnerships with regional education institutions, and a collaborative business community, Loveland gives companies the foundation to grow with purpose.

From startups building next-generation technologies to established companies solving global workforce challenges, Loveland provides the space, resources, and connectivity to succeed. Here, mentorship isn't just a concept — it's a competitive advantage, and long-term investment in people drives long-term business success.

Whether you're expanding advanced manufacturing operations, building a talent pipeline, or looking for a community that supports sustainable, values-driven growth, Loveland's Economic Development team is here to help you make it happen.



Ready to build what's next?
Grow your business in Loveland today.



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