

Hal Nippert's goal is for U.S. Metal Works to employ 60 people full time and earn a gross income of \$5 million a year.

Photo by Scott Newton

U.S. Metal Works

Innovative business enjoys fast growth in past year

by SCOTT NEWTON
Staff writer

Looking at it from a certain angle, a person could mistake the building for an office complex.

But once inside the shop of the 35,000-square-foot building that is home to U.S. Metal Works Inc., one is struck by the cranes suspended on steel beams, the number of people who are busy welding and the volume of metal fabrication projects underway.

Hal Nippert, president and general manager, said company officials expect to have gross sales this year of \$4½ million. The business currently employs about 60 people, with summer a time of peak employment.

The company got its start in a 4,000-square-foot building on Lusted Road with two or three employees and a \$100,000-a-year gross income.

Nippert said it now averages about 40 employees. His goal is to employ 60 people year-round and gross \$5 million. The nature of a company changes once it begins to employ more than 60 people, he

said.

Between 60 percent and 70 percent of U.S. Metal Works employees live in the Sandy area, and about 40 percent of the company's gross goes toward salaries.

The company does a good share of its work out of state and hires some workers on site.

This past year the company did about 40 percent of its business in Montana, 20 percent in California, 20 percent in Oregon and the rest in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Washington.

The timber industry's return to health has contributed to the company's good fortune. U.S. Metal Works has just completed work on two mills in Montana. One was a \$500,000 job and the other, \$600,000. The company also manufactures and installs multipurpose storage bins. It sold about 40 units this past year.

A plastic pipe manufacturing company hires U.S. Metals to put in its mixing tanks and other conveying materials.

And the company's automotive line will account for about \$1½ million of its gross sales this year.

U.S. Metal Works makes an automotive parts cleaning system that flame cleans engine blocks and heads, cleans off the resulting carbon with steel shot and then "tumbles" the engine parts to remove the shot.

The system is preferred on the East Coast because the traditional way of cleaning grease off engine blocks is with a caustic acid, which is environmentally unsafe and has drawn the attention of regulatory agencies.

The automotive line also includes a grinder that resurfaces engine blocks and heads.

Nippert said there are 15,000 businesses in the United States that rebuild automobile and other engines.

"We'd like just a fraction of that business," Nippert said.

Nippert acknowledges that it is hard to tell what the economy holds in store, but the past year and a half have been good. The company has enough work to keep running full steam until at least mid-November.

Although the company has enjoyed steady growth even during the recession, Nippert described

those years as "really tough."

The company is equipped to take on most metal fabrication work, and two full-time and one part-time engineer/draftsmen are employed. The company has its work approved by an engineering consultant who is registered in all of the states in which it conducts business.

Nippert got started in the metal fabrication business in 1956 when he began working as a sheet metal apprentice. In 1969 he started his first manufacturing and installation business, Pacific Pneumatic, which he sold in 1975.

He then went into the restaurant business, purchasing the exclusive Sizzler Restaurant franchise for the Portland area. He opened nine restaurants before selling the franchise back to the company in 1979.

It was at about that time that he founded U.S. Metal Works.

Nippert recently made a presentation at a meeting of the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce. Tom Reber, program chairman, said it was his guess that few people in Sandy were aware of the types of work being done in the Sandy Industrial Park.

Patrols a deterrent to drunken driving

A recent "saturation patrol" in Sandy netted law enforcement officers plenty of offenders.

Sandy police, Clackamas County sheriff's deputies and the Oregon State Police combined their efforts for the patrol from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. Aug. 14 and 15.

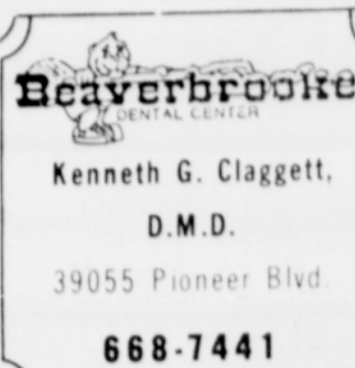
Police arrested five people for driving under the influence of intoxicants, served four outstanding warrants, and issued 19 tickets for traffic violations and 40 warnings for defective equipment, according to Sgt. Dan Wolf, outpost commander for the Government Camp detachment of the Oregon State Police.

"All total, it was a pretty successful endeavor," Wolf said.

Police officers covered an area that included Sandy and the rural area west to Boring and east to Firwood Road.

Wolf said they stopped 44 vehicles.

He said the saturation patrols, which are designed to keep drunk drivers off the streets, may be more effective than stopping people at a road block, a method that has been used in the past.



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Keeping Posted

Garden Club plans meeting

The Sandy Garden Club will hold its first meeting of the 1987-88 year on Wednesday, Sept. 2, in the recreational building of the Hood Chalet mobile home complex, 17655 Bluff Road.

Coffee time will be at 9:30 a.m. with a business meeting and program beginning at 10 a.m. The program will be presented by Ed McRae, local lily expert, on the subject, "Lily Varieties for a Succession of Bloom."

All guests and members bringing guests will receive a gift made from flowers at this meeting, according to

new president Kathy Cook.

Action Center plans sale

The Sandy Community Action Center, 38982 Pioneer Blvd., will sponsor a rummage sale on Saturday, Aug. 29, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The sale will be in the parking lot and on the dock behind the building.

The sale will be a fund-raiser for the Action Center.

Items for sale will include clothing, accessories, small appliances and furniture.

Hunter's safety class planned

A hunter's safety class will be offered Monday, Sept. 14, through Thursday, Sept. 17, from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Sandy VFW Hall, 38452 Proctor Blvd.

Youngsters between the ages of 12 and 18 need to take the course in order to hunt. This will be the last course offered this year.

Kelly Adovnik, Sandy police officer, will teach the class, which will cover the safe handling of firearms, ethics and survival.

A special survival course will be offered in conjunction with the course.

ferred in conjunction with the course.

Class of 1982 to hold picnic

The class of 1982 will hold its five-year reunion on Saturday, Sept. 5, from 11 a.m. to dusk at Wildwood Park.

For more information, contact Gayle Roth at 771-5549, Trudy Brown at 622-3203 or Becky Rodrigues at 761-1818.

The picnic will be catered and class members are asked to make reservations as soon as possible.

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