

From the Triad Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/triad/news/2021/02/05/machine-welding-of-danbury-building-new-plant.html>

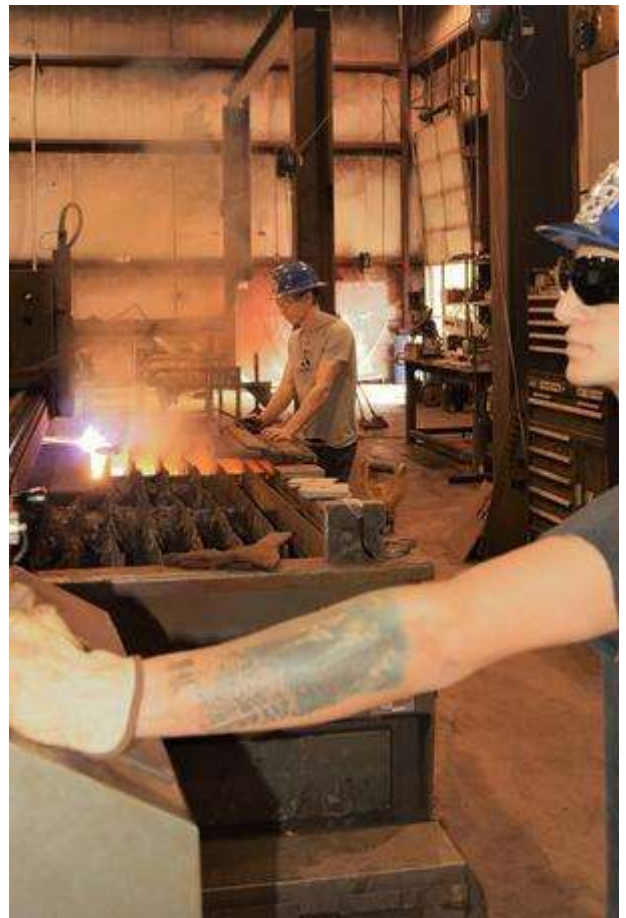
Triad steel fabricator looking to hire as it expands with new building

Feb 5, 2021, 2:25pm EST

A Stokes County manufacturer specializing in making steel components for cell towers and transformer platforms for utility poles is setting the foundation for growth with plans to create as many as 30-plus new jobs.

Machine & Welding of Danbury, a family-owned and operated company established in 2013, is investing approximately \$3 million in a new 37,500-square-foot building at 1035 Stewart Road in Walnut Cove, where it will relocate its manufacturing operations from its current 8,500-square-foot facility. The additional capacity of the new building will allow a wider range of customers, the company having recently landed clients in commercial building construction, mining and marine industries.

MWD was founded by retired Forsyth County Sheriff's Office Capt. Stuart Yale, who leveraged relationships to build the company on the strength of four to five



MARK HOPKINSON

Machine & Welding of Danbury fabricators Tristan Merritt (right), Scotty Mock operate a plasma cutter.

primary clients. He was joined in 2018 by his son-in-law, CFO/COO Mark Hopkinson, who brought 20 years of financial industry experience with large banks and brokerage firms. Now residents of Winston-Salem, Hopkinson's wife, Heather, continues to operate their real estate brokerage in Charlotte.

"We were growing at a pretty good clip there, but I thought we could do more so we decided to expand," Hopkinson said. "We had revenues increase by 35% from 2018 to 2019, and then Covid hit, but we decided we were still going to move forward. There was opportunity out there and we basically can build anything.

"Our motto is we build what others say can't be done. We can build things more quickly and more efficiently."

That decision was made easier by the addition of more than a dozen clients, including one of the nation's largest cell tower construction companies. Hopkinson said MWD's growth can be attributed to the company's ability to quickly deliver, literally, where others cannot.

Vertically integrated with a fleet of three tractors and trailers, MWD offers direct delivery of components to the job site.

"The flexibility is what's really keeping us ahead of a lot of competitors because most of them will call an LTL (less-than-truckload) company, which is fine because we use LTL less freight also. But if a client needs something by Thursday because they have a \$5,000-per-day crew coming in, they're paying for them to sit in the hotel if the delivery isn't there."

The new MWD facility will feature two crane rail systems that will allow trucks to drive into the plant, receive loads of steel and then drive out. In addition to more manufacturing capacity, the larger space will provide for better maneuverability of products inside.

"We can only do a certain amount of jobs at a time because we can't move steel in and out of the shop," said Hopkinson. "We cut a lot of material. As a medium-size company we have a lot of that equipment that the big guys have. We just don't have any space."

The new shop is located near Forsyth Tech Community College's Stokes County Center, where the school has recently launched a

welding program. Hopkinson said he is developing a relationship with the school that could eventually provide a pipeline of welders, which remain in short supply across the Triad, to MWD. Jobs he expects to fill include two or three on the executive team, office personnel and on the manufacturing floor.

Currently employing 17, Hopkinson expects a need for an additional 10 to 15 jobs when the new facility opens, with plans to eventually grow to about 50 employees. MWD will continue to lease its current space, likely for warehousing.

“We could we could have gone a few places that were considerably cheaper, but my father-in-law wanted to stay in the community in Stokes County,” Hopkinson said. “He has a real passion for working with the kids there who may or may not want to go to college and want to learn a trade where they can make some decent money.”

Andy Warfield

Reporter, Manufacturing, Aviation,
Economic Development and
Workforce

Triad Business Journal

