

LOCAL NEWS

Ultra Machine plans another expansion

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Since beginning in Kings Mountain in 2006, Ultra Machine & Fabrication, Inc. is expanding again, this time in our own backyard.

This will be the company's second expansion since its start-up less than two years ago, giving it about 70,000 total square feet of manufacturing facilities in Kings Mountain. Vice President Wendell Fannin said that the new expansion will create additional jobs, but the exact number is unknown.

"In the Kings Mountain facility, this is mostly manufacturing. This is the heart of our manufacturing here. When you look at what we do inside this facility we use state of the art equipment," he said. "We want to continue to grow this awesome manufacturing capability that we presently have and to do that we're going to have to transfer some of our welding from here. That's what that new expansion is for. It's going to be all welding."

Fannin said the company wants to put 50 welders in its new KM location. UMF currently operates three high definition plasmas and a 6,000-watt laser in the manufacturing facility. The

company will be bringing in two more HD plasmas, with hopes of another 6,000-watt laser in the future. "When you look at our capability, we're adding more robotic welding. In order for us to continue to grow this we have to shift out to make more room," he said.

The new building gives them an extra 20,000 square feet of space for their welders. "We welcome the new expansion of Ultra Machine, here in Kings Mountain," said Mayor Rick Murphrey. "It has been a pleasure to work with Mr. (Frank) Stewart (owner of the company), beginning in 2006 when he started in the current building he is in now."

Murphrey remembers when Stewart first looked at the property. He said that at the time, he was not sure if they could fill up the entire 50,000 square feet facility in Kings Mountain. "He talked about maybe leasing some of the building out," Murphrey said. But in what seems like no time at all, UMF outgrew their home facility. After starting with a few dozen employees, they now have over 150 in Kings Mountain, alone. The company continues to grow, hiring new employees every week.

"They are an example of a

world-class organization, providing jobs for our community in an excellent work environment," Murphrey said. "We're extremely proud to have Ultra Machine in our industrial family and under the leadership of Mr. Stewart we know they will continue to be very successful."

Fannin said that Stewart is a visionary. "The passion and excitement he has for Ultra starts with Frank and permeates throughout the whole company," he added.

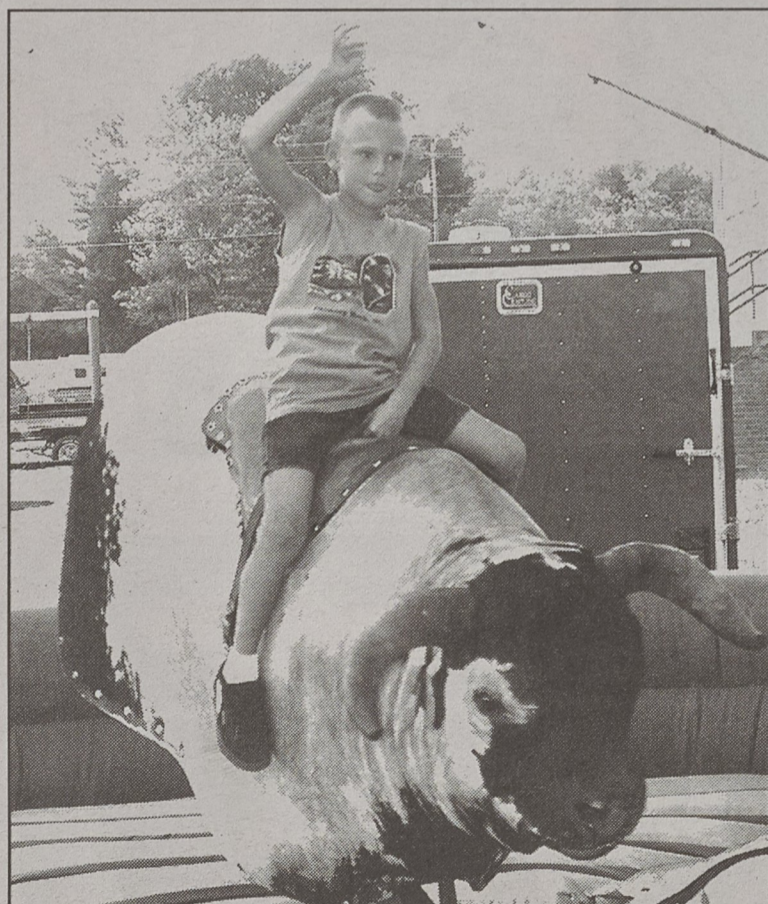
Earlier this year, the company expanded into a 100,000-plus square feet facility in Shelby, where it moved its headquarters. The company utilizes a total 227,000 square feet at its Shelby plant. UMF is looking to maybe expand again in the near future.

"Ultra Machine and Fabrication is a precision fabricator specializing in plate and sheet metal parts for various industries. Ultra provides parts for cutting edge leaders in the Military Industry. Ultra takes great satisfaction in manufacturing armor parts for companies that build vehicles to protect our soldiers around the globe," according to UMF's website at umf1.com.



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD

Mayor Rick Murphrey (right) and Ultra Machine and Fabrication Vice President Wendell Fannin look to the future of UMF outside of their new expanded location in Kings Mountain.



Devin Hambright rides a mechanical bull at last week's Bethware Fair.

WORK SESSION

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for September 4, at 6 p.m. in the county commission chambers.

Illegal Immigration

"There's been a lot of concern both nationally and locally about illegal immigrants. With that concern I thought I needed to bring it up at our work session," said Commissioner Ronnie Hawkins. He had asked the Sheriff's department, health department and DSS for figures outlining the impact of illegal immigrants on Cleveland County.

"They didn't give us any numbers," he said. "The only help we got was from DSS. They said there were 259 children (in the county) that they served from illegal immigrant parents." He questioned the health department about the practice of different people using the same social security card to get care. But there was no real way to track the occurrences, according to the department.

"We know there has got to be an expense there somewhere," he said. "If there are 259 kids, someone's receiving benefits." Another problem, he added, is that some senior citizens can't seem to get medical aid, but illegals can. "I don't have a problem with legal immigrants, just those that take away from the system without putting anything into it," he said.

Medicaid Relief

"We gave a big hooray for Medicaid relief," Accor said. She added that the relief came with the option of having a referendum for an increase in the sales tax or a local option land transfer tax. "But we don't see a need for those taxes at this time. We want to relieve the burden, not put extra burden on our citizens."

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