

The Backbone of America Temptress Choppers a custom business

Temptress Choppers is hitting the market with a new line of motorcycle accessories that will cross over to the metric bike market, as well as harleys and choppers

([PRWEB](#)) July 21, 2004 -- Jackson County has a strong history of manufacturing, but with the new world economy adding competition from cheap labor sources overseas, many businesses were lost.

For Nick Kasik of Grain Valley, that history is not gone forever. In fact, as far as he is concerned, it's still alive and well. It just looks a little different now because it's adapting.

Kasik is the owner of a business called Temptress Choppers, a designer of custom motorcycle parts.

He got started in the business in 2002, when he decided to give up his job in construction management and open a small motorcycle shop in Grain Valley. The business adapted to the point where he was doing a lot of custom work. He soon learned there weren't a lot of parts on the market to help him with what he was trying to do.

Kasik ended up closing his shop and decided to instead start looking for a way to make custom parts and sell them nationwide. He began searching for partners with knowledge of manufacturing.

His quest eventually brought him to a bike show in Blue Springs, where he met Joe Thomas of Raytown. Thomas has a product design and manufacturing background, specializing in making underwater tools and equipment, and parts for remote-control cars.

The pair formed a company called Advanced Development Services, with each partner's business now under one umbrella corporation. They each retain control of their separate businesses, but can freely consult with each other.

With the product design and marketing facets in place, all they needed was someone to handle the manufacturing and shipping. That is where Keith Mongeau and Russ Merwin came in. Their company, 2M Manufacturing, is a brand new venture and became the perfect partner Kasik and Thomas were looking for.

"These guys give us their ideas and blue prints, and we design it to their specifications. We manufacture it, polish it, chrome it and ship it. They're out designing parts, pushing orders and beating the pavement for customers, and we're their one-stop shop for creating the parts," Mongeau said.

Kasik said the partnership was a natural and perfect fit, because it helped everyone and kept costs low.

"If you do it all under one company (marketing, a machine shop and design) you have a lot of overhead. We do it all together, but separately. We all do our own things, that way if I'm not selling enough products for him to make a living, he can back fill with other sources. It's a way to diversify and keep our operation strong," Kasik said.

The signature part that 2M Manufacturing will produce for Kasik is a custom motorcycle mirror, in a flame-



shaped design. Kasik is also making adapters for his mirrors, so they will fit not only Harley-Davidson motorcycles, but the much larger market of foreign bikes as well.

Wholesalers were really interested in the parts, but told Kasik the prototype was just too expensive. So he brought the designs to his partners, who are helping him simplify. The goal is to market the mirrors for under \$100 each, and Mongeau is key to that process.

"I come up with ideas and he has to figure it out. Sometimes the stuff I give him is just a crayon drawing on a napkin," Kasik said as they all laughed.

Kasik said the goal is always to simplify the manufacturing process, yet maintain the integrity of the part. That means the partners all must have complete faith in each other. They also have a rule that the main component of everything they do is have fun in the process. To that end, the guys stay relatively casual and informal. Since they usually market to wholesalers, they don't even really have an office.

"Our office last week was Russo's Pizza. Before that, I think it was an IHOP," Thomas said, laughing. "The bike rally in Sturgis is going to be a really great office for Temptress Choppers."

Nick said he has a laptop computer and generally markets to wholesalers, so he doesn't have a lot of walk-in customers.

"With the nature of our business, having an actual office just adds a whole lot of expense we don't really need. I spend most of my time on the road, marketing parts at bike shows. Last year I was in Sturgis, Daytona and New Orleans, pushing parts. It's a fun business to be in," Nick said.

The products being made are for 5,000 parts or less. Anything more than that and it is cheaper to have them made overseas. That's the reason why most manufacturing operations in the United States are now much smaller than in the past.

"For anything under 5,000 parts, the economy is just hitting right now. We're seeing a major upswing," Mongeau said. "We can't compete with overseas when it comes to making like 6 billion parts, but their quality is not what you'll find in America. We're second to no one as far as quality of the parts that are manufactured in America."

Kasik said for people like him who come up with parts no one has ever built before, they need a local machine shop.

Jeff Stead/the Examiner

This wheel is another example of the company's specialty.

"We're not going to fly to China, because they aren't going to have time to deal with someone like me who doesn't want 2 million parts. The stuff I build may eventually turn into an order that large, and then 2M Manufacturing might consider outsourcing the parts to build them cheaper. Either way, I don't care, because the part gets built and sold," Kasik said.

Another reason is that ideas don't always pop up at a convenient time.

"What will probably happen with my next mirror prototype is the idea will come at 7 p.m. on a Thursday, and we'll be sitting around here with a 12-pack, munching down Nacho Cheese Doritos. We'll stick around until



we've built a couple of them and got the process down. You can't do that on-the-spot stuff anywhere else," Kasik said.

Mongeau said he believes that is one reason why manufacturing will remain the backbone of America. He said it might not stay in the same capacity of the past, like the Union Wire Rope company that once used the entire 640,000 square feet of the building where 2M Manufacturing now leases about 20,000 square feet.

Kasik said companies like Union Wire Rope made a living focusing on one thing. The technology didn't change much and they kept going until someone figured out a way to make it faster, better and cheaper. Then they went out of business, because they couldn't adapt.

"The companies that are building America and coming up with cutting edge technologies are not always these huge companies anymore," Mongeau said. "The big guys are limited in a lot of ways toward what they can build, and that is where we come in. We're always going to be needed and never going to go away. We just have to adapt to the market and keep up with the latest technology and equipment."

To reach James Dornbrook e-mail james.dornbrook@examiner.net or call (816) 350-6322.

www.temptresschoppers.com

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Contact Information

Nick Kasik

ADS

816-847-2303

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