

Interfab services custom steel market

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff
Interfab Steel on Armstrong Avenue caters to the custom steel market in Georgetown, all over Ontario and across the globe.

"We do fabrication of tanks, conveyors, structures... anything in carbon steel, stainless steel, aluminum. We sell to people like Neilson's, chemical plants and mines and automobile manufacturers," said Interfab owner Wayne Lister.

Ten years ago, Mr. Lister was working for a steel plant as a General Manager. Ten years before that he got into the steel business and dreamed of opening his own steel fabrication plant.

"Right now we're building another 80 feet on back of the present building. We're doing alright," smiled Wayne Lister.

The company must be doing alright. The expansion is costing about \$150,000. Mr. Lister hastens to add, "a long time ago, we started from nothing."

Interfab has designed and formed some useful machines, including a seven foot fan for General Motors and a "computer controlled" carousel for Fortamix in town. Last year they made conveyor belts for Ford and are presently making bell buoys for the Department of Mines and Services.

The largest piece of metal work produced by the company barely made it out the back door. It was a

"heat exchanger for the automotive business, over 15 feet in diameter," said Mr. Lister.

Interfab has a diversity of products. "We do quite a lot of silencers and soundproofing equipment. We do a lot of pollution control equipment all over Ontario. Last week, we shipped one to the States," said Mr. Lister. The company also had a tank order from a Canadian company for the Middle East state Oman.

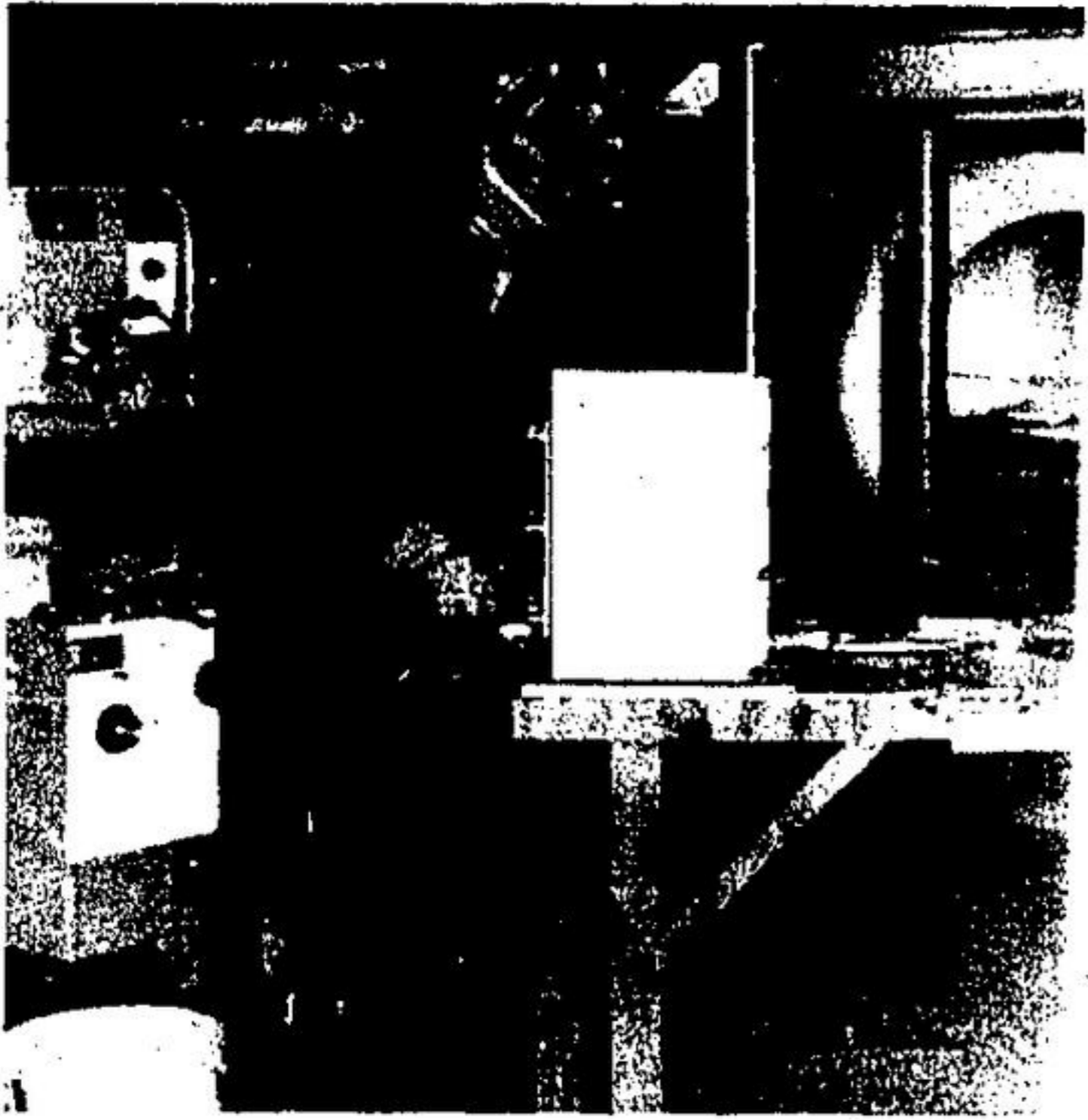
If someone came in off the street and ordered one of Interfab's large metal tanks, they would wait slightly over a month to receive it. Orders are put in for the custom material and responded to by the factory staff of 12.

Owner Wayne Lister recognizes the competition between fibreglass producers and steel companies, but is not himself involved. "Quite a few tanks now are made of fibreglass, but unless you really had an erosion problem, you wouldn't use fibreglass. Usually, you would go to stainless steel," he said.

Metals are "used for strength purposes," added Mr. Lister.

Mr. Lister's welders work hard in the factory, and cutters can be seen sheering the slabs of steel, soon to be custom creations.

There is no smoking in the office of his Georgetown factory, but Mr. Lister chuckles and adds, "customers who have a big order can smoke."



Welder Gord Thompson of Interfab Steel makes sparks fly as he prepares the steel that is formed into many shapes and sizes for custom orders.



Don Constant, manager of Fortamix Feed and Seed in Georgetown, conducts business in his office on Armstrong Avenue. Fortamix is a division of the mega-corp BASF.

Fortamix firm 20 years in town

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff
Fortamix feed company opened its doors for wholesale in Georgetown 20 years ago. Today it is a corporate member of the mega-corporation BASF.

"As we were operating as a private company, our largest supplier of vitamins was BASF. In order to integrate - that's the buzz word of business today - BASF offered to purchase the company," said Fortamix manager Don Constant.

BASF is familiar to most people as the mass-producer of cassettes, both audio and video. Their expansion into the Georgetown market has allowed Fortamix to grow.

"We've got one big warehouse all the way through the back. It (purchasing the neighboring building) gave us more than twice the space," said Mr. Constant.

Fortamix produces premix nutrient base for livestock and poultry. The premix base is sent to be further processed. "Our customer is the feed mill," said Mr. Constant.

The premix is "a highly concentrated vitamin and mineral complex," said Mr. Constant.

Bill Anderson sold Fortamix to BASF in 1982. "The owners sold, took out their shares and profits, and retired," said Mr. Constant, but

traces of the early owner, Bill Anderson, are found in the packaging of premix products: they are still labelled "Fortamix".

Today's Fortamix office is non-smoking (smoking is restricted to the lunchroom) and the receptionist answers the phone "BASF-Fortamix". Otherwise, changes are in the area of expansion. The two buildings on Todd Road were joined by construction and the staff now numbers 27 employees, with Fortamix retaining much of the staff, particularly nutritional experts, from the early days. "BASF treated us well," said Don Constant.

Fortamix is linked to BASF terminals in Montreal via the computer on Don Constant's desk. The BASF head office is scheduled soon for relocation to Toronto, said Mr. Constant.

Fortamix, in addition to being part of the BASF chain, has a small warehouse in Quebec, a half-hour drive from Montreal. Fortamix, a division of BASF's Intermediate and Fine Chemicals, is kept abreast of BASF progress by communiques from the head office.

"Though we're a small company they really make us feel part of the corporation," said Mr. Constant.

Don Constant started with Fortamix in 1979 as a controller. He became manager in 1986.

Economy Forms bridges the gap

By CHERYL MOODER
Herald Staff
A bridge spans across a cavern where below a raging river frothes and bubbles. There is a chance the plate girders manufactured in the Economy Forms plant in Georgetown were used to make the bridge.

Economy Forms has been in operation since 1934 when W.A. Jennings created a plant in Des Moines, Iowa, which has grown to a 9 1/2 acre plant.

The operation moved north in 1964 when a Georgetown plant began being built. In 1966 offices were moved from Toronto to join with the Halton Hills plant.

Economy Forms manufactures special forms for projects such as the Dome Stadium in Toronto. With special forms they are used only for a specific project and cannot be reused, said vice-president Bernie Savard.

The plant also manufactures standard forms, which can be leased for the duration of a project and then returned to Georgetown.

Lightweight standard forms can be moved by hand and are adaptable to any dimensions one would want them to meet, Mr. Savard said.

Heavy duty forms must be crane handled.

When the forms are returned to the plant they are cleaned, oiled and prepared for the next time, the vice-president said.

All equipment is wire brushed to clean the surface and sent back to be repainted. Right now Economy Forms is busy preparing equipment, which came back in at Christmas time, for spring.

All forms are made from scratch, the vice-president explained. Economy Forms buys flat steel, which is put on a shear and cut to the required length.

The steel is then formed into whatever shape is needed and all the connecting holes punched into it.

Last year approximately 700 million pounds of steel was shipped from the 88,000 square foot plant.

Economy Forms, which has operations world-wide, sends forms around the globe.

Redi-Radium forms, which are adjustable to any radius up to 20 feet, have found their way on projects such as the power plant in Sault Ste. Marie and the Toronto Dominion Centre power towers in downtown Toronto.

There is also a junior redi-radius form, which is adjustable to a radius of up to 10 feet.

The redi-radius are a new line to the plant developed approximately two years ago, Mr. Savard said.

Other projects the company has worked on are: last year it produced forms for the Canadian embassy in Beijing, made the segmented forms for bridges in the States and the Credit River Bridge in Streetsville.



Vice-president Bernie Savard oversees the workings at Economy Forms Corporation.

Forms from the Georgetown plant can be found on buildings such as the Olympic Stadium in Montreal, Amphitheatre Stadium in British Columbia and the Bruce, Pickering and Darlington Ontario Hydro plants.

"We have done so many things," Mr. Savard said. "We have contributed to a lot of work right across Canada."

In the past year, the company installed an auto CAD system, the vice-president said. Economy Forms is hooked into company computers across North America.

The past year two additional engineers were added and the company is presently training more.

Construction forecasts for 1988 are good, Mr. Savard said. There will be plenty of work on highways, bridges and sewage plants.

Economy Forms has put bids in to supply the forms for a James Bay Project in Quebec and a power plant in Charamra, India. "The forecast is very good for the coming year," Mr. Savard said.

The company manufactures all the parts in the Georgetown plant and then ships the equipment to warehouses. A warehouse in Aldrie, Alta. distributes the needed products to Western Canada.

The Georgetown building was built big enough to handle business for the next three to five years, Mr. Savard said.

When working to full capacity, Economy Forms keeps 50 full-time employees busy. Currently there are 32 workers keeping the assembly lines humming.

There are five in the engineering department.

"It is just a nice company," Mr. Savard said. "We have good people who all work together as a team to achieve our goals and objectives."

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