

LOCAL COMPANY HELPING SUPPLY FACE SHIELDS TO FRONT-LINE WORKERS

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Brad Cairns couldn't believe his eyes.

He'd stopped by Rollcut Inc. to watch a demonstration of the dies the company had created in order to make face shields. Using a hand-cranked machine that Cairns likened to a spaghetti maker, they rolled a sheet of plastic through two rollers, and out came the finished product - a face shield with all the appropriate holes to fasten a strap cut out.

Cairns and his staff had been cutting the shields on a router, but it wasn't a very efficient process. Now Rollcut's dies had cut that process down to about a minute. For hours, they took turns cranking out hundreds of face shields.

And this was just the test. Once the dies were put

on a machine, the production went from one a minute to one every second.

Georgetown's Boris Barbir has been making dies for 45 years, learning the trade from his father in Croatia. He has helped companies make everything from car parts to security tabs to tea bags to helmets. But the Rollcut owner says this die is the most important one he has ever made.

"These face shields - if that's what it takes to save somebody, if they help keep them safe, what's more important than that?"

Many of those face shields are coming back to Halton. They've supplied them to a dozen hospitals, including Joseph Brant in Burlington, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial, Milton District and Georgetown, as well as the Milton Fire

Department and Halton Police. Local businesses, like Zesty Pita in Burlington and Oakville, are also using the shields.

Cairns runs a wood-working company out of St. Thomas called Best Damn Doors. His friend in Germany told him how the country was being impacted by COVID-19, and that he had better prepare because it would eventually reach Canada. He told him face shields were in high demand and recommended that he buy as much plastic as he could.

Cairns did, and his friend's warning proved to be right.

"We're a small company. I sat down with my staff and said, 'Do you want to roll the dice on getting involved, do what's right and contribute something?'"

They quickly switched from producing cabinets to



Herb Garbutt/Torstar
Brad Cairns and Rollcut's Boris Barbir (centre) and Heiko Mantik (right) do a test run of a face shield.

producing and assembling adjustable face shields. He has since recruited five other companies to form Wood Workers Unite. Together, they are producing

and distributing 15,000 face shields per week.

"I couldn't supply these without the help of Rollcut," said Cairns, who found the company by

chance in a Google search. "They've gone over and above to make sure we don't run out of parts."

Cairns purchased one of Rollcut's older machines. But until it is moved and reassembled, Barbir has lent him one of his test machines so they can continue to produce face shields.

"What kind of company does that? Just lets you take one of their machines?" Cairns said.

Barbir said it is all about the spirit of co-operation. And, he said, as the country recovers, there will be an opportunity to repay those who have helped out.

"We've become too reliant on China and the U.S.," he said. "We're going to need to boost the economy. We need to buy more from Canadian companies, help our own country, even if it costs a little more."

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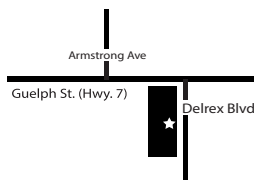


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