

# Machine Shop Moving Into Its New Union Gap Facility

By Randy Luvaas  
Managing Editor

Eleven years ago, Bob Hendry drew up plans for a new building for LaRock Enterprises.

In a matter of weeks the company will finally move into that building, relocating from its west Yakima home to a new facility at Union Gap's Ahtanum Ridge Business Park.

It's a big move for the small company, a machine shop that Doug LaRock started in his garage 25 years ago.

He built a shop next to his father's home on Orchard Avenue in 1987 and has been operating out of two buildings there. The new place, located at 1401 West Pine St. off Goodman Road, will bring everything under one roof.

It also about doubles the space.

To go along with the move, the company is changing its name to Eagle Machine.

Hendry started working for LaRock 20 years ago and became his partner 11 years ago.

About a year ago they purchased 2.25 acres at the Ahtanum Ridge park near LaSalle High School. Max Gabbard Construction built them a new 11,000-square-foot facility that includes a large shop and 2,000 square feet of office space.

"We just ran out of room," LaRock said. "We needed to upgrade and expand. We've been very cramped with minimal room to move around. This allows us more working area and the chance to expand a bit."

They purchased a new piece of equipment that wouldn't fit into their current facility. Some of the equipment they'll be using is so large and heavy that the new building had to be designed around it, since extra-strength concrete flooring is needed beneath the machinery.

The move won't mean adding more employees right away — they

equipment they manufacture. We're not a manufacturing company, we're more of a job shop."

The ability to handle custom orders has been a mainstay of the company since the start.

"It can be on a part-by-part basis or in larger quantities," Hendry said. "Sometimes people come in needing just one part. Sometimes they might

trict.

"We just built a specialized saw for Advantage Wood Products that they use for fruit bins, that increased their productivity significantly," added Hendry. "We've got some very reliable customers who bring us jobs."

"There are probably a half-dozen bigger customers that make up a large percentage of our business and another 25 regular ones that bring us work on a smaller scale," LaRock said.

The company doesn't do sheet metal work, instead specializing in metal turning and milling jobs.

"Our ability to handle some larger pieces than many other shops has been one of our niches," LaRock said.

Hendry noted that installing four overhead cranes in the new shop will increase their efficiency in working with larger pieces.

Although they started pondering plans for a new building more than a decade ago, it took this long for everything to line up properly.

"Back around 2000 the economy wasn't too good either," said Hendry. "By waiting we were able to set aside some money for property and look for the best location."

And although today's economy isn't exactly conducive for most expansion plans, it worked all right for them.

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Doug and Linda LaRock and Bob and Glenda Hendry show off the new facility for LaRock Enterprises, which will change its name once it moves into the Union Gap shop.

have 15 now — but "gives us the capacity to do that in the future," LaRock said.

Eagle, as it will be known from now on, manufactures parts for machinery including farm equipment, packaging, printing and aircraft.

"We work mostly with local companies," Hendry said. "Most of our work is parts that they use for

need hundreds. It can be one item or a thousand."

For instance, the company has been making parts for aircraft landing gear for GE Aviation in Yakima. It also has done "many hundreds" of printing press plate cylinders for local Shields Bag & Printing, and quick-change orifice plate holders for Yakima-Tieton Irrigation Dis-

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# Bikini Cuts Does Haircuts — With A Different Style

Sonny Johnson says he wanted to open one of those so-called “sexpresso” coffee stands six years ago. But he didn’t, and in the past year or so others followed through with the idea.

The stands featuring flirtatiously dressed female employees have been a hit with some customers and a scandal to others. But they’ve definitely been an attention-getter.

Now Johnson wants to try a similar approach with a different venue — haircuts.

Hence his new Union Gap hair salon, Bikini Cuts, which he opened at 2407 Main St. recently. It’s a barbershop where “a little off the top” takes on a whole new meaning.

“It’s just girls in bikinis cutting hair,” he said.

In the first week of business,

## Machine Shop

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“We were able to work with Wheatland Bank and a good program with the SBA (U.S. Small Business Administration) for financing, and there were some federal incentives that helped,” he said.

“We just try real hard to give customers what they’re looking for,” said LaRock. “We’re not the cheapest place in town, but we try to give good value. That’s kind of our niche — give them what they want, something workable that will last.”

Once they get moved in to the new place, the partners are hoping to find someone to lease the old one.

## Catering Business Now Specializes In Healthy Lunches

Angela and Anthony’s Creative Cuisine is offering some different catering options in Yakima.

“My husband (Anthony) has been doing catering on a larger scale for dinners, weddings and so on,” said Angela Crawford. “Now I’m going in a different direction.

“I like doing lunches with healthier things like salads — all kinds of salads, pasta salads, fruit salads, green salads. And when the weather changes we’ll be doing soups.”

Her lunches also feature artisan breads and desserts.

Crawford says she delivers meals throughout Yakima County for business lunches and other events.

You can reach her at 494-2312.

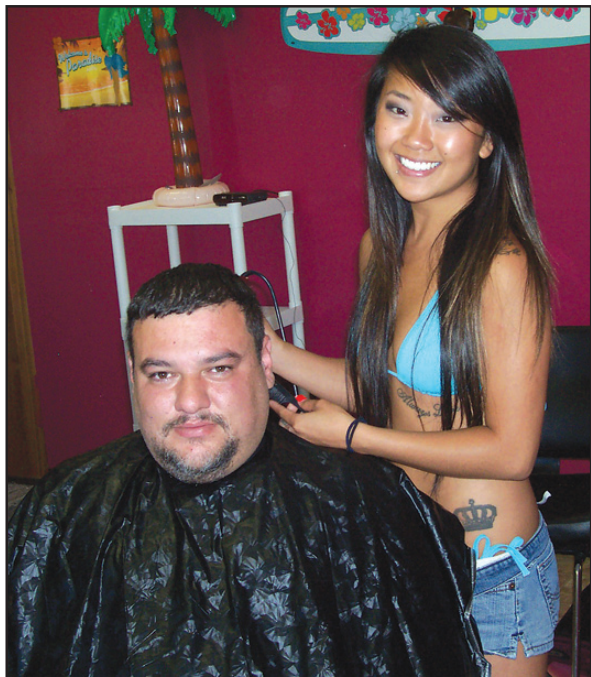
though, many people misunderstood the new Bikini Cuts sign outside the shop.

“We got people coming in wanting to buy a bikini,” Johnson said.

But once people figure out what Bikini Cuts really is, he thinks it

will catch on. He eventually hopes to franchise the shops.

“I see how popular those coffee shops are. I think this will be just like that. I’ve been seeing how successful they have gotten and I just wanted to do something like that but a little different.”



Owner Sonny Johnson gets a trim from Bikini Cuts receptionist Kimber Buehler at the new haircut salon in Union Gap.

He has three stylists now and is looking for more.

The shop takes both appointments and walk-ins, he noted. The phone number is 728-8623.

Right now they’re open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week.

This is the second business Johnson has opened in the past year in

Union Gap. He also runs King Kong Recycling at 514 S. Second Ave.

The scrap yard opened eight months ago, accepting all kinds of metal including aluminum, brass, iron, copper and steel. They don’t accept paper or glass, he noted.

It’s open from 7 to 7 seven days a week.



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