

Lehman Trikes plant expands to fiberglass production



Ken Hines, president of Lehman Trikes, Corp., explains the plans to remodel the company's existing plant in the Spearfish Industrial Park to accommodate its new fiberglass production operation. Pioneer photo by Wendy Pitlick

■ Move designed to retain local jobs, save money

BY WENDY PITLICK
Black Hills Pioneer

SPEARFISH — Lehman Trikes' recent decision to produce fiberglass at its Spearfish factory will not only allow the company to save money, but it will also save local jobs.

Recently the company, which manufactures three-wheeled motorcycles, announced that it would build a fiberglass production facility at its factory plant, located in the Spearfish Industrial Park near Premier Bankcard. Company president Ken Hines said prior to this decision Lehman Trikes outsourced all of its fiberglass needs.

This isn't the first time Lehman has produced fiberglass. When the company headquarters was located in Westlock, Alberta, Canada, it produced all of its fiberglass in-house. But when the company closed down its Canada facility it began to outsource all of those needs.

"Given economy of scale, transportation and to keep work in-house we are now going to go back and rebuild that as a core competency for the company," Hines said.

The operation will make the Lehman Trikes operation in Spearfish about 70 percent self sufficient, as the company still outsources many of its other needs.

Hines said the fiberglass facility would utilize almost 8,000 square feet existing space at the Spearfish plant, which the company added when it assumed the contract to build three-wheeled Harley Davidson motorcycles. That contract will expire in June of this year, as

Harley decided to move its three-wheeled production into its York, Penn., plant.

Therefore, Hines said once Lehman Trikes has completed its production for Harley Davidson in June, it will revamp its plant to accommodate the fiberglass production, building separate rooms for the operation. Additionally, employees who were hired to produce the Harleys will now move into fiberglass production. The company will hire one additional experienced manager for the operation.

"It's all designed to keep the workforce here in Spearfish and make us more of a vertical company as opposed to a horizontal company," Hines said. "So we won't be looking for new folks from the outside, we will be retaining folks who are already with us. That's part of the intent behind it."

Additionally, Hines said the new venture will allow the company to save money, and the company plans to pass those savings on to its customers.

In addition to its fiberglass operation, Hines said Lehman Trikes is preparing to announce its newest customer product. Soon, he said, the company will become the only one of its kind to produce custom-painted trikes from its factory. In fact, he said it is preparing to reward some customers who named the paint jobs with some gift certificates to local restaurants.

Lehman Trikes, which moved its Canadian operation to Spearfish in 2004, started with about four employees, Hines said. Today, the company employees about 114 people and has four facilities in town, including its headquarters on Seaton Circle, its factory plant in the Spearfish Industrial Park, and two other warehouse facilities in town.

Spearfish prom held this week



The 2010 Prom King and Queen of Spearfish, Ryan Jones and Kelsey Senden, who were crowned after a grand march at the school gymnasium. Kevin Norton



Junior Princess Christine Bergmann and Prince Ryan Tollefsrud were crowned on Saturday evening after a grand march at the Spearfish High School gymnasium during the 2010 prom. Kevin Norton