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## Corbin Native Keeps Custom Truck Work at Home

CORBIN, KY – You could order your big rig truck parts from the Internet, or you could drive to Corbin, Ky. to see the parts you’re buying being handmade by Robert Smith, a third-generation trucking industry business owner. Smith is counting on the latter.

The Corbin native is no novice to the trucking industry and its truck owners’ needs and wants. He was educated, from a boy, by his father, Robert Smith, Sr., and grandfather, Oral (O.L.) Smith, in the business.

In 2015, he put his years of experience to work for himself in his own business called SH Tube, LLC, from a shop on his grandfather’s property. His focus is on improving the interior and exterior of trucks and giving his customers good quality, made-in-America, stainless steel products from hand-selected, raw materials. His business motto is: Built for truckers, by truckers.

When Smith needed to buy new equipment to expand his Laurel County shop, he contacted SKED about a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Micro Loan. With the loan funds, he was able to buy a metal brake, semi-automatic band saw and drill for his company, using the loan proceeds, and continue making all of his products by hand and of the best quality.

As part of an SBA Micro Loan with SKED, businesses receive free technical assistance in the specific areas they choose. Staff has helped Smith maneuver through several key steps in his business’ growth.

He said SKED and its resources have played a big role in his expansion.

“SKED has helped my business with the start of our new product line. They have been so easy and great to deal with,” Smith said. “The employees at SKED are topnotch in their jobs,



Robert Jr., O.L. and Robert Smith Sr.

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and make you feel like family. We will be using SKED in many ways, as our business grows. I would recommend anyone to talk with SKED on any business ventures.”

SKED Director Lending Chris Coldiron worked with Smith to get his loan approved.

“Robert is a creative, hardworking businessman. He has taken what he has learned about the trucking industry from his father and grandfather and created new and innovative products for old product categories. It has been a pleasure working with Robert and assisting him with the purchase of the new equipment SH Tube needs for its continued growth.”

To learn more about SH Tube, visit their website: [www.shtube.net](http://www.shtube.net).

If you know a small business owner in need of working capital or funds to purchase equipment or building improvements, contact SKED at (606) 677-6100 or email at [chris.coldiron@centertech.com](mailto:chris.coldiron@centertech.com).

SKED is a nonprofit economic development organization and has been designated a CDC by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The organization was formed 32 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky.

Its corporate office is based in Somerset and serves a 45-county service region. A staff of nine professionals works with business owners, small and large, to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs, and provide them the technical assistance and training they need to succeed.

For more information about SKED, visit our website: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).