



Leslie's Outdoor Power sells and services equipment from chainsaws to go-karts to compact tractors.

## Mower Shop Keeps Up With The Times

"My biggest selling point is that I'm a servicing dealer. We know the products," says Leslie Lawrence. Providing quality service has been a priority since he bought his first small mechanic shop in the early 1990's. Now, his family and other employees carry on the philosophy in the 7,200 sq. ft. showroom/shop of Leslie's Outdoor Power in Longview, Texas.

From the beginning, Lawrence was determined to change the perception people had of repair shops. Mowers and other items to be repaired were moved to the back so customers only saw a clean, organized showroom. It was a welcoming, safe space for everyone.

The Vietnam veteran was happy to be his own boss and get back into hands-on mechanical work after graduating from Texas A&M in industrial education and working for others. It didn't take long for his reputation to earn recognition. His business was one of the top 10 Snapper dealers in the country for 3 years in a row.

The store expanded its lines with quality equipment to cover everything from lawn mowers to chainsaws to go-karts to compact tractors, with companies like Toro and Bad Boy contacting Lawrence to become a dealer for them.

"We're one of the few DR servicing dealers that carry the products," Lawrence

says. Leslie's Outdoor Products makes sure its mechanics receive all the education and training they need to keep up with today's sophisticated engines. That includes a new electric zero-turn mower and the ability to install the underground wires for robotic mowers.

He credits his family for staying up to date on equipment. Both sons are very mechanical. A daughter-in-law handles online sales to grow the business. His wife and grandchildren have been part of the business.

Lawrence also credits God, his faith, and the focus on prioritizing a physically and morally clean atmosphere for the business' success. He praises the loyalty of mechanics and other employees.

"We're a family," he says. "When it's a family-owned business, you have more control of what you're doing."

While Lawrence and his wife are technically retired, he likes to help out at the store and work on building projects when he's not building hot rods or restoring antique airplanes.

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## They Specialize In CBD Wellness Products

Penny Kephart manages an acre of hemp, which fits the 1,000 plants necessary to qualify as a licensed grower in Kentucky. Every June, she plants a cultivar known as Stormy Daniels using a 1948 Farmall with a tobacco setter. Harvest takes place once the crop is 4 to 5 ft. tall and has produced amber-colored tassels. Each plant is cut at the base and then hung in her grandfather's old tobacco barn to dry.

To comply with regulations, Kephart Acres must contact the state at least 30 days before harvest. The state takes samples to ensure there is no more than 0.3 percent THC and reports the findings within 2 weeks. Each season's batch is third-party tested for potency and traces of heavy metals and pesticides. This lack of THC means that Kephart Acres products are legal in all 50 states, won't get you "high," and aren't habit-forming.

The oil is then processed by a USDA-certified facility out of North Carolina. All of the hemp is extracted through a simple, preservative-free lipid system extraction process designed to maintain 99 percent of the plant's purity and potency.



Kephart Acres grows hemp on just one acre and plants using a tobacco setter.

The final product contains natural terpenes like myrcene, caryophyllene, pinene, and limonene.

The resulting oil is used in a variety of wellness products, including D9, Delta-9, full spectrum gummies, CBD body butter, CBD oils suitable for pets and people, hemp soap, body scrubs, hand-poured candles, and more. The farm's pet-friendly natural CBD oil is blended with wild Alaskan salmon oil. Pricing ranges from \$8 to \$75, and orders can be shipped across the U.S.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kephart Acres; www.kephartacres.com).

## Family Business Builds Classic Windmills

By Lydia Noyes, Contributing Editor

Melvin Troyer's grandfather established a windmill business in 1929, and it's been in continuous operation ever since. "My dad is 86 now, and he's still involved in the operations," says Melvin Troyer. "We don't let him do the installations, but he's still busy in the workshop. He's helped here since he was a kid, and so have I."

Troyer estimates that approximately half his customers purchase the windmills for work purposes. Many of them are Amish, and they use them to draw water to manage crops and livestock. The rest of the buyers prefer the windmills for nostalgia and to enhance the beauty of their property. "They'll often connect them to a decorative pond for some aeration," he explains.

Today, the Troyer Windmill sources its windmill parts from the Aeromotor company, a business that's sold essentially the same windmill since its start in the early 19th century. Sizes range from 30 ft. to 80 ft., though most windmills fall between 30 to 40 ft. The wheels tend to be between 6 ft. and 16 ft. in diameter. "Our most popular size is a 40-ft. tower with an 8-ft. wheel," says Troyer. "It's a good working size. Pricing for that one starts around \$5,000 to \$6,500 before shipping and assembly." The size of the blade makes a significant difference in each windmill's functionality. While an 8-ft. wheel will pump water from 100 ft., a 10-ft. wheel can reach 200 ft., and a 16 ft. over 1,000.

The company handles installations across most of the U.S. east of the Mississippi. He estimates that the company takes on close to



Windmill sizes range from 30 to 80 ft., with 6 to 16 ft. diameter wheels.

75 percent of all installations themselves, averaging approximately one project a week. Installation requires digging four holes between 4 to 5 ft. deep for the base. The team will put together the bottom layer and slowly climb the windmill, assembling the rest as they go. "There's usually a rope and pulley system involved," says Troyer. In most cases, installation takes under a day. The crew also handles necessary repairs on older models.

Overall, Troyer is proud that his grandfather's legacy is continuing. "There aren't a lot of folks installing windmills these days," he says. "We offer something unique in the area."

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"Bison leather is a good-wearing material. It's top-grain leather, and it breathes well," Stone says.

## Custom Furniture Made With Bison Leather

Stones Furniture is a third-generation family business in Rapid City, S.D., started by Greg Stone's grandparents in 1933. When demand for custom bison furniture grew, Stone added the Dakota Bison Furniture division to the business.

The first chair, "Tatanka" (Native word for bison), is just one of many styles available. Each chair, sofa, or recliner starts by hand-cutting tanned bison leather. Bison hides are typically smaller than cow hides, Stone notes, since bison harvested for meat are younger and smaller.

"Bison leather is a good-wearing material. It's top-grain leather, and it breathes well," Stone says, noting he has many repeat customers and has sold furniture in most states, including Alaska and Hawaii.

Customers can choose from styles available online and customize colors and extra design features they want to add.

"Or people bring their own ideas. We do a lot of sectionals in specific sizes," Stone says. He also works with businesses that make log frames for customers who want to mix log and bison leather.

Bison leather furniture starts at \$1,600 for chairs and \$4,100 for sofas. Pouches, computer sleeves, and other accessories such as pillows and wallets are also available. Stone adds that customers occasionally bring their own furniture to reupholster with bison leather.

By utilizing hides and other bison byproducts, bison ranchers, the National Bison Association, and craftsmen such as Stone honor the Native American tradition of respecting bison and not letting anything go to waste.

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