

If you're looking for new ways to add to your bottom line, take a look at the money-making ideas featured here and on the next page.

If you've found or heard about a new income-boosting idea, we'd like to hear about it. Send details to: FARM SHOW Magazine, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 800 834-9665) or email us at: editor@farmshow.com.



Portable 18-ft. long picnic table rides on the chassis from an old van and hooks up to pickup's receiver hitch. Inventor Robert Hanselman rents the table for \$50 a day.

He Rents Out Portable Picnic Tables

"My wife said I was crazy for building a portable picnic table that I could pull behind my pickup," says Robert Hanselman, a South Dakota inventor. "But since I built it, I've had to build two more to rent out."

Hanselman's mobile table is 18 ft. long, rides on a chassis from an old van, and hooks to his pickup's receiver hitch. The frame is made from 2 by 2-in. tubing. Treated deck lumber is used for the seats and top.

Hanselman says he built the first table because his family needed a place to display the pumpkins that they grow on their hobby farm. "We wanted something portable and easy to move, and this was just the ticket. Then somebody suggested we take it to a local ballgame to have a nice place to sit. It became real popular after that," Hanselman says. Now he rents the table for \$50 a day and has a long list of people using it, some as far as 50 miles away. Big Daddy's Barbecue, a vendor at the DakotaFest farm show in nearby Mitchell, has used Hanselman's original table. It seats 18 people comfortably.

The table rides on an axle from an old

mini-van that Hanselman found at a local salvage yard. It weighs about 1,000 lbs., has signal lights and can be towed down the road at nearly 60 miles an hour. After the success of the first table Hanselman built a second one just like it. When a vendor wanted to rent both tables, Hanselman put a hitch on the back of his first table and towed both of them behind his pickup at the same time. "It saved me a trip over and back, and that paid for the hitch," Hanselman says.

This past summer he built a third table and all three have been used often. "We've rented them for weddings, baseball and football games, family reunions, fairs and DakotaFest," Hanselman says.

This winter he'll work on a new design to include a grill that will mount off the back wheels. "I think there's an opportunity to get real creative and if the rental cost is reasonable there's a good market for the tables," Hanselman says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Hanselman, 284 East Enemy Creek, Mitchell, S. Dak. 57301 (ph 605 999-4139; Hanselman@santel.net).



With the help of modular shipping containers and greenhouse structures, business partners Ben Greene and Tyler Nethers are bringing farming to urban areas.

New Way To "Farm" In Urban Areas

Business partners Ben Greene and Tyler Nethers are on a mission to bring farming to urban areas with the help of modular shipping containers and greenhouse structures.

"The 'Farmery' will be a hybrid of a farm and a store," Greene says of the growing-and-retail concept they're building. They already have a couple prototypes of shipping containers for growing mushrooms, with greens, strawberries, herbs and flowers growing on a vertical panel system on the outside wall within a greenhouse frame.

"The panels are movable, and creating them was one of the most challenging jobs," Greene said. His expertise is industrial design – the Farmery was part of his Master's thesis project. Nethers has greenhouse experience and currently manages the aquaculture facilities at North Carolina State University. Both grew up on farms.

The concept is to lease land in dense, urban neighborhoods with few high rises that would block the sun. Costs are reduced because the produce doesn't need to be transported, and electricity and lights do double duty – growing crops and lighting the retail store.

Customers will find added value in the shopping experience because they can see the produce growing and pick it themselves. The produce can't get any fresher, and there's less waste because it doesn't have to be picked and shipped.

"By eliminating the middle man, we create a much more efficient system that gives the grower and the retailer higher margins," Greene says.

The Farmery will also use aquaculture



Greens, strawberries, herbs and flowers are grown on vertical panels.

to raise fish and hydroponics to grow the produce in nutrient-rich run-off water.

The business partners say the system is modular so it can grow to accommodate increasing local need. Shipping containers are inexpensive, stackable, perfect for mushroom growing and easy to retrofit with the panels and greenhouse frames.

Greene and Nethers have been busy promoting their idea, and by mid-October, investors pledged about 40 percent of the \$300,000 cost to set up the first Farmery. The cities of Durham, N.C., and Peekskill, N.Y., have expressed interest in assisting them set up.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ben Greene, Farmery, 3125 Tryon Rd., Raleigh, N.C. 27603 (ph 864 921-7967; www.thefarmery.com).

Quilters Love His Metal Barn Quilts

One of the most popular items sold at recent quilt shows has nothing to do with sewing. But Mark Fitzgerald's metal barn quilts capture the fancy of quilters who proudly display them to tell the world that, "A quilter lives here".

"It had to be divine inspiration," Fitzgerald says of the idea. He had no experience with quilters in his family. But when he visited the shop of a friend, who had a laser metal cutter, he recognized an opportunity to come up with something different than the animals and silhouettes that are so common. Barn quilts came to mind. He designed one and had his friend make it out of steel. When Fitzgerald, who was working at an advertising agency, showed it to a quilter he worked with, she loved it. He had more made and sold a few locally.

The real test came when he attended a major quilt show in Madison, Wis.

The quilters loved the metal barn quilts, and he had the same experience at a couple more big shows. Fitzgerald quit his job and

started designing full time for his Classic Metal Company in Mendota, Ill. His friend, Ted Wright, makes them in his shop.

"Early on, quilters asked me where they are made," Fitzgerald notes. "They like that they're made in the U.S."

The metal barn quilts are powder-coated, 14-gauge steel and come in black, navy, dark red, hunter green and white. They come in 1-ft. (\$29), 2-ft. (\$59), 3-ft. (\$119) and 4-ft. (\$175) sizes. The smaller sizes make them versatile to hang inside or outside on walls, fences, etc. Some quilting business owners use them to advertise. Other customers buy several to group together to create a metal quilt.

"I stick with classic quilt patterns," Fitzgerald says, including the Ohio Star, Dutch Rose, Bear's Paw, Lone Star and Sister's Choice.

"The most popular pattern is the Mariner's Compass. Both men and women identify with that pattern. Also, they like the Americana star, especially with sons and daughters in the military," Fitzgerald says.



Mark Fitzgerald's metal barn quilts capture the fancy of quilters, who proudly display them to tell the world that "A quilter lives here".

He adds that the Mariner's Compass was difficult to design, and he almost gave up on it. Designs require drawing the pieces that fall out of the metal, so he needs to think in reverse and to make sure the pattern will look good in one color.

As he approaches the anniversary of his first big show, Fitzgerald is adding other



items featuring barn quilt designs, such as napkin holders. He sells his items at large quilt shows throughout the country and on his business's website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Classic Metal Company, 115 16th St., Mendota, Ill. 61342 (ph 815 252-0104; www.classicmetalcompany.com).