Eckels started with a well-used 20-ft. shipping container they found on Craig's List and made remodeling it into a coffee shop a family project.

Portable Coffee Shop Made From Shipping Container

After a trial run last fall, Stephanie Eckel, an English and speech teacher, is eager to open E's Espresso in Eagle Bend, Minn., as soon as summer vacation starts.

Eckel's electronic engineer husband, Jay, suggested using a shipping container to fulfill his wife's lifelong dream of owning a coffee shop. The couple started with a well-used 20-ft. shipping container they found on Craig's List and made remodeling it a family project.

"On the outside it has dings, but Steph said that was OK, she wanted it to look industrial," Jay notes.

He added a door and windows, insulation, wiring, and covered the interior walls. Steph and their daughters painted the inside with impervious paint to meet commercial kitchen codes and painted it black with a white roof on the outside. The Eckels shopped on Craig's List to purchase most of their commercial equipment and Jay built a new control board for the coffee maker.

He installed an RV tank and pump for the water supply. Used water drains outside to a tank on wheels for gray water that can be emptied into the town's sewer system. Jay built jacks under the container to lift it up to load and unload on a trailer he made out of two trailer house axles.

A local business owner offered space and electricity for E's Espresso to set up in August 2021. Stephanie, who has been making cappuccinos, lattes and Italian sodas since 2005 for school fundraisers, wasn't sure how much business she would have in Eagle Bend (population 500).

"We had 150 people the first Saturday," she recalls. "I was blown away by the community support. People thanked me because they didn't have to drive to a bigger town for coffee, and my prices are cheaper."

Lattes and dirty Chai (tea with a shot of Espresso) are most popular along with Italian sodas, made a little different with Stephanie's own recipe. She also serves smoothies and tea.

The container is big enough to have an 8-by 8 ft. area for customers and four stools inside. Plans for this summer include an awning and table for people to sit and visit outside.

Located on a major highway, U.S. 71, that leads to Minnesota's northern lakes and cabins, E's also gets business from travelers, though much of it's from locals.

"It's so fun to meet people and hear their stories," Stephanie says, noting she and her daughters look forward to working at the portable coffee shop this summer.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, E's Espresso, Stephanie Eckel, Eagle Bend, Minn. (ph 218-639-6855; es.espresso. container@gmail.com, Facebook: E's Espresso).

Evans Machinery will repair any spreader, though they estimate that 90 percent of their restoration business involves the Agricraft equipment they sell.

Repair Service Keeps Spreaders Going

Evans Machinery, Inc. manufactures and sells Agricraft spreaders and other forms of farm equipment. But the company also offers a spreader repair and refurbishing service.

The family-owned business will repair any spreader, though they estimate that 90 percent of their restoration business involves the Agricraft equipment they sell. Most of their repairs come from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia due to travel logistics but they will work with anyone.

When Evans Machinery first started, they sent customers with broken spreaders to local welding repair shops. Unfortunately, a lack of familiarity with the equipment at the shops meant these repairs could be slow and expensive. The solution was obvious - make repairs an in-house service. "When we do repairs at the shop, we can see immediately when problems are worse than anticipated, and we usually have the parts available right there,"

says sales representative Jeff Ingram. "This saves everyone time and money."

Those in need of repairs can contact the office directly. Ingram will request photos to understand the problem better and provide an estimate. In cases where the problem is too hard to diagnose virtually, he may arrange to make an on-site visit.

Once an estimate is set, customers can bring their equipment directly to the Wilson shop. Turnaround time varies based on the season and severity of the repairs but typically takes 4 to 6 weeks.

Prices for repairs range from $5,000 to $15,000. In comparison, a new spreader can cost up to $35,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Evans Machinery, Inc., P.O. Box 3408, Wilson, NC 27895 or 5123 Ivy Court, Wilson, N.C. 27893 (ph 252-243-4006; www.evansmachinery.com).

Jon Anderson uses a CO2 laser to burn images into wood.

He Started A Business In His Welding Shop

Dave Burns has been a welder since the late 1990's and specializes in custom fabrication of stainless steel. Past projects range from boat and yacht accessories to assemblies for the food and pharmaceutical industry.

In 2016, Burns was diagnosed with Meniere's disease. This rare, chronic inner ear condition currently doesn't have many treatment options. Patients in late stages often deal with constant dizziness and other ear problems.

Burns first experienced symptoms in 2007, and the condition has since progressed to the point that it affects every aspect of his life. His symptoms include hearing loss and high-pitched squealing in one ear and a low roar with pressure in the other.

Burns' shop, Industriium, allows him to work on unique welding projects at a pace that matches the complications of his condition.

"With Industriium, I hope to improve my quality of life while living with Meniere's disease. Not having a set schedule allows me to work around the symptoms that go along with the disease."

Most of Burns' sales have been at

Dave Burns creates custom welded lamps, where the handle, when turned, can operate each of the bulbs independently.

shows and markets. He is building an online presence through Facebook, Instagram and Etsy. Prices range from $52 to over $300, depending on the piece and the amount of material used in the production process. Product availability changes based on Burns' inspiration.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dave Burns (dave@industriium.com; www. Industriium.com).

He Lasers Plat Maps, Photos Onto Wood Plaques

A photo of a 20-year-old township plat book page engraved on wood recently caught our attention. Jon Anderson created it on his commercial CO2 laser at his rural Iowa farm. It's just one of the many items he creates with the laser and his CNC equipment as part of his sideline business, Anderson Custom Cuts.

"With the commercial laser, I can take any photo and burn it to wood," he says.

Anderson, who farms 1,200 acres with his dad, focuses much of his work on agriculture. He's engraved old photos as well as new photos of families with tractors or other farm equipment layered on a flag backdrop. His 2nd Amendment, Lord's Prayer and Biker's Prayer have also been popular.

Anderson's first woodworking was done with scroll saws, starting about six years ago. When he was asked to create signs for the county courthouse, he invested in a CNC machine and the laser. Both help him to be more productive and flexible.

He had the idea to do township plat book pages but has had mixed success. Because

of the small print for names and details, photos need to be very precise with high resolution and straight on. Sometimes they just won't work, but he welcomes people to contact him if they are interested. The cost for an 11 by 14-in. engraving starts at $75.

He can create pieces up to 20 by 28 in. on his laser and his flags are usually 16 by 30 in. Most are done on Baltic birch because the engraving stands out on the light-colored, blemish-free wood. He has also worked with other hardwoods such as maple and oak.

While it's not a full-time business, he finds time for wood engraving between fieldwork and during the winter.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jon Anderson, Anderson Custom Cuts, 28748 Co. Hwy. K45, Blencoe, Iowa 51523 (ph 712-420-1598; andersonenterllc@ gmail.com; Facebook: Anderson Custom Cuts; Twitter: Jon Anderson@ WoodworkFarmer).