

Dayton Daily News

News article from our archives at DaytonDailyNews.com/archives

[Return to Document](#)

- **BYLINE:** Thomas Gnau Staff Writer
- **DATE:** April 1, 2007

- **PUBLICATION:** Dayton Daily News (OH)

- **SECTION:** Business
- **PAGE:** C1

XENIA — Michael Collinsworth shows off his new 4,000-watt Mitsubishi laser as if it were a toy. The laser itself slices through a sheet of aluminum three-eighths of an inch thick as if the metal were a toy. Sparks fly and a white-yellow glow throws shadows in a corner of the metalworking shop. But the laser is no toy. It's serious business at Collinsworth's company, **Custom Manufacturing Solutions Inc.** The aluminum piece will be deburred — smoothed — and painted. Then it will likely serve as a part on a military ASV — armored security vehicle. For years, the metalworking company outsourced laser work. After investing \$610,000 into a laser, the firm can now do its own, Collinsworth said. "It's amazing how many of my customers historically have asked me, 'Do you have a laser?'" Collinsworth said. "Now, we can say, 'Yes.'" Saying "yes" to military and government customers is increasingly part of how CMS thrives. "Quite honestly, we're primarily military-related," Collinsworth said. "The military is what has really caused our growth." Today, the company is shipping three times what it shipped in 2003, the year the war in Iraq began, said Collinsworth, CMS president and a Bellbrook resident. The company is also expanding into a second plant southwest of its original plant on Bellbrook Avenue. In 2005, the company made 12,000 turret rings that support weapon stations atop Humvees. In 2006, CMS produced 10,000 ring turrets, and Collinsworth expects to make 12,000 of the rings again this year. Most of the firm's military business is related to vehicles in some way. CMS makes parts for armored Humvees, Abrams tanks, Striker tank-hunters and ASVs. Collinsworth said the firm is most competitive on parts that require several of its services — welding, fabricating and painting, for example.

While CMS is doing well in this environment, the Iraq war has not necessarily been a boon to American manufacturers across the board, said Dave Huether, chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers, a Washington-based trade and advocacy group.

Growth in manufacturing since 2003 is attributed mainly to consumer spending, business investment and exports, although that growth has slowed somewhat, Huether said.

"The only thing you can make some connection with that consumer confidence increased once it became clear that the (Iraq) war was not going to spill over into some regional conflict," he said.

Four CMS employees can operate the firm's new laser, but Collinsworth intends to train others so that

the machine can be operated across three shifts.

"I've been wanting one of those things for years," he said.

Contact this reporter at (937) 225-2390 or tgnau@DaytonDailyNews.com.

Custom Manufacturing Solutions

Founded: In 1989 as MTC's manufacturing division. Spun off from MTC Technologies in 2002, the year MTC went public.

Services: Metalworking — machining, welding, painting and more — for military, government and industrial customers.

Employees: 110 full-time. Firm expects to hire about eight more workers in the coming year.

Sales: On track for \$15 million-\$16 million in sales in 2007. In 2003 sales were \$4.9 million.

Online: www.cusmfgsol.com

Copyright, 2007, Cox Ohio Publishing. All rights reserved.

-
- **Painter Craig Stockton hangs tank parts to dry at the plant. Staff photo by Teesha McClam**
-