

## Ingerson Custom Welding Sees Continual Growth

“I like doing the specialized products.” That’s what Brian Ingerson, owner of Ingerson Custom Welding LLC, told the audience at the Eureka Chamber of Commerce meeting on December 17.

As speaker for the evening, Ingerson explained the business located a mile south of the east edge of Eureka. Judging from some of the reactions, most had no idea that his business is so extensive.

Starting small, he worked out of his garage from 2001-2006. In 2006 he built the shop where he currently works, but there are expansion plans in mind.

Products he makes are many and varied, but all are done to customer specifications. The artisan in Ingerson has produced unique items like kid-sized farm accessories and a decorative firepit. A bale feeder on a wagon that holds 4 bales, a buffalo corral, portable shelters, gates, customized corral systems – those are some of the items he has also produced. He builds at least 100 gates a year. A big order for ten work benches for the John Deere shop in Ashley will be done in the near future. He’s about ready to start to his seventh customized hay rack.

Ingerson estimates that 50-70% of his business is doing repair work.

There have been times when business has been very slow, and each of those times has necessitated a change in business to keep it profitable. One of those times was when orders dried up. That was the year he was busy until Christmas, finished up all orders and left to visit family. Returning after 2 weeks, there were no orders waiting. So, he built bale feeders and set them out at his farm. He sold 2, had orders for 2 more and hasn’t caught up since. He said he is typically 1 ½ to 2 months behind, and that has been since January 2008.

The part of the business that gives him the greatest satisfaction is when someone comes in, explains or has a picture of something they like, and then they tell Ingerson how they would like to have it done in a different way. Ingerson then designs it and makes it. It’s those one or two of a kind items that he enjoys most.

His biggest help in the shop are new and bigger machines that make the work go faster. Those he said have definitely been worth the investment. Future equipment will be a large overhead crane and a new air filtration system that will recirculate the air every 4 minutes. A new building will be constructed and attached to the current one. A website is in the plans so newly designed products can be pictured.

Ingerson does not have any employees, but said he has enough work to add one. That is a possibility if he finds the right person who shares his high work ethic and precision craftsmanship.

Ingerson also readily points out the help that is given by his wife, Francie. The petite lady is quick to jump on the forklift to unload trucks bringing raw materials – a sight that makes the truck drivers do a double take. She also helps him put steel away when another person is needed and she runs some of the shop equipment.

All of this is so close to Eureka, and very few people knew the extent of the business. Now they do.

The evening continued with the Chamber business meeting and committee reports:

City – The airport project is finished; a few things were redone for the final inspection. Sanitation is in the bid phase. Construction of Highway 10 has been happening since October with the necessary measuring. \$1,800 was appropriated for the Christmas promotion.

School – A joint election will be held with the City on April 9. Negotiations are done every 2 years and will be done this coming year in January and February. Blaine Aman has been hired as head custodian and Charles Glaesman will be assistant custodian.

Lions – Over \$500 was received in donations for Toys for Tots. The gifts have been purchased and wrapped.

Eureka Development – The first project of Youth Voices will be Christmas caroling on Dec. 22 at the Treasure Chest promotion, nursing home, and assisted living. 28,000 tickets for the Treasure Chest promotion were printed for participating businesses.

Schmeckfest – Entertainment for the September celebration will be Lloyd Kiesz and others on Friday night, Statler Wannabees at 1:00 PM on Saturday, and Dennis and Margie Walker for the supper entertainment. The parade will be on Saturday at 2:30 instead of 3:00 as it was in past years. There will be bingo and a car show on Saturday morning, and a tractor pull at noon on Sunday. Bingo fundraisers being held once a month have been very well attended.

Second Hand Rose – An Easter dinner will be held around Easter time.

New Business:

The final details of the Treasure Chest day were discussed.

Ivy Bossert and Wanda Jundt were thanked for their help to Chamber.

Because of low attendance at the meeting, the election for board members was postponed.

*Wanda Jundt*