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ABOVE: Paul Sibenik plasma-cuts a piece on a cart system for Lubrizol Corp. at Kinetic Technologies in Wickliffe. BELOW: Joe Lucas marks with paint bolts that have been set to a certain torque on carts at "K-Tec," which specializes in developing carts to replace forklifts.

## K-Tec enjoys rise without a forklift

### Firm's vision of safer transportation is catching on

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Kinetic Technologies, Inc. President Larry Tyler must be used to witnessing fast results.

In just five years, his Wickliffe-based material handling company has moved into a 110,000 square-foot facility and cultivated relationships with famed corporations like Ford Motor Co. and Whirlpool Corp.

But above all, he'd like companies worldwide to share his vision sooner than later: A forklift-free world.

Through the production of a series of carts to replace fork trucks, Kinetic, also known as "K-Tec," is capable of providing internal plant solutions for the packaging and handling of anything from automobile parts to soda bottles — in some cases, over 2,000 pounds of them.

"(Other companies) all want to know, 'How can we do things without putting fork trucks on the floor,'" Tyler said. "How do you move containers that weigh a lot?"

While Tyler says he knows of others that were "dabbling" in fork-free manufacturing, he believes K-Tec to be the first to make fork-free systems its main focus.

Tyler, who spent nearly three decades at Lincoln Electric Co., opened the company with partner John Neumann on the conviction that forklifts, with all of their poundage, are less productive and safe than their products.

The carts come in seven different forms, including three-shelved carts and flat deck carts, reminiscent of a flat-bed truck with space to be hooked onto a tugger.

The hooking of carts creates a train of materials that will increase production and save inventory space, Tyler said. Brute strength is not a prerequisite to pull the carts.

Still, none of the carts list a capacity capability of less than 1,500 pounds.

However, the hottest commodity has been K-Tec's Engineered to Order line — a system that enables a company to purchase a specific design for tailored needs.



Tyler estimates K-Tec has completed about 65 different ETO models.

But Tyler added that safety is the beginning driver for a company wanting to convert to K-Tec's form of material handling.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 100 workers are killed every year in forklift-related incidents.

Another 20,000 are seriously injured on an annual basis.

"People understand that the liability is high," Tyler said.

For Tyler, moving forward with K-Tec is all about expanding while remaining a major representative in an industry that should continue to grow throughout the future.

"To be able to be one of the major spokespersons for the fork-free industry, especially to be in on the ground floor as this new industry begins to expand" Tyler said, "How lucky can you be?"

For more information, call Kinetic Technologies at (440) 943-4111.