



For Immediate Release:

For more information contact:

Bebe Leitch, Director, Existing Industry Services
Catawba County Economic Development Corp.
828-464-7198

Powder River Technologies Opens in Newton

A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned Thursday afternoon, December 9th at 2:00pm for Powder River Technologies, Inc. to celebrate the opening of their new facility in the Mid-County Business Park on Industrial Road in Newton. Powder River Technologies offers customers a wide range of problem solving skills and services all under the same roof. One service provided by Powder River is powder coating. This powder coating technology produces a hard durable finish that is resistant to chipping, peeling and scratching. Available in many different colors, it is also much more environmentally friendly than traditional wet paint. Powder River Technologies provides powder coating for Timmerman Manufacturing's outdoor furniture line. Powder River is capable of high volume work, while also able to complete custom work as well. In addition to powder coating, Powder River offers metal fabrication, engineering services and drafting services.

Mark Sigmon, owner and founder of Powder River Technologies, was employed for seventeen years by Corning Cable Systems. A 1985 graduate of North Carolina State University's Mechanical Engineering School, he worked in Corning's Research and Development Department for eight years and spent nine years in their Telecommunications Cable Plant. In 2001, Mark was named Inventor of the Year for Corning's Cable Division. During the last round of lay-offs at Corning, Mark saw the opportunity to move out on his own, an idea that had been on his mind for some time.

Currently, Powder River Technologies employs two full-time workers and three part-time workers. Their goal is to grow their work force to 12 to 15 employees over the next five years. Powder River's need for part-time workers has led to a mutually beneficial relationship with Catawba Valley Community College. Mark has employed students from the Welding Program as well as the Drafting Program. The students' need for part-time employment that will accommodate their class schedule has been a perfect match for Powder River's needs. At the same time, it has provided valuable experience for the students. "We at CVCC recognize the importance of small businesses in the area giving our students the opportunity to get on the job experience while they are still in school,"

says Randy Hedrick, CVCC Welding Technology Instructor. "While working part time at Powder River Technologies, our students are learning first hand exactly what businesses like this are looking for in an employee, as well as gaining experience in how those businesses operate. By working closely with businesses in the area, we understand the needs of the employer and the employee."

"The opening of the new Powder River Technologies facility in Newton is yet another sign that our local economy is rebounding and we thank Mark Sigmon for his commitment to this new business and the faith he has shown in our county by locating it in Newton," said Kitty Barnes, Chairman of the Catawba County Board of Commissioners. "We are even more fortunate whenever we can add a new industry that is going to grow in the future. We congratulate Mr. Sigmon on his new endeavor, and are confident this is only the beginning of many years of great success for Powder River Technologies."

Robert Mullinax, Mayor of Newton, said, "We are excited about the opening of this new facility in Newton. The prospect of creating 12-15 new jobs during the coming years will be a benefit to our local economy. We thank Powder River Technologies for their investment in our city and wish them much success."

Bebe Leitch, Director of Existing Industry Services for the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, said that Powder River Technologies is a good announcement for the community at this time. "It has been a pleasure to work with Mark to find the right location for Powder River Technologies. Small businesses like Powder River Technologies are integral to the success of our local economy. We are grateful to Mark for his investment in this community and look forward to working with him for a long time to come."

#