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This gun holster firm plans to expand space, add jobs and increase production

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Mike Vedder's business originally started in his 390-square-foot garage.

As co-founder of Vedder Holsters LLC in Mount Dora with his wife Brooke, he began making gun holsters out of his home in 2012, creating a business that spilled into the guest room and other portions of his house. That prompted a move into a 3,900-square-foot space in 2014, and following more growth, a move into a nearly 8,000-square-foot space last May.



JIM CARCHIDI

The company, which currently has 37 employees, grew to more than \$5.4 million in revenue last year, and plans to nearly double its space in Mount Dora with an expansion set to open July 1. That move means more product, more employees and the potential for more revenue in the nearly 15,000 total square feet the company will have. It's also one of the region's fastest-growing firms.

Here, Vedder, 35, speaks with *Orlando Business Journal* on the potential business effect of the expansion, as well as the job creation potential:

What will this expansion mean? "The additional space is going to allow us to put more focus on product development. Some of the constraints in the current space we had were we basically had enough space to produce our current lineup and didn't have enough space for additional employees and inventory. We are looking forward to that additional space. We will be able to have a section that focuses solely on the forming of the new product that allows production to handle the growth of that, as well as an expansion into our product development section with multiple CNC machines, which allows us to create our own tooling. All of that will be to focus on expansion further than where we currently are."

What will the employment picture look like? "Our expansion into our new place took a bit longer than we expected, but we already have started some hiring. We recently went from 30 to 37 employees. We have a couple of offices that are doubled up and it is a little crowded, but after next month, we have some construction that needs to be completed. That will allow us to not be on top of each other so much here, as well as give some room to add some additional employees to handle growth."

How will this affect your product line? "One of the things that has been exciting for us is as we have grown and the volume of production has increased, we've had to get more efficient. Being able to create

our tools in-house instead of being held by third-party people allows us to more quickly make a product that is more consistent. Although it is hand-crafted, they become consistent. When you have different weapons with different holsters, they can fit differently by hand. With us creating the tooling in-house to our specifications, the products become more crisp, better looking, better feeling and it creates a better product across the board."

Ryan Lynch

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