

# Usher Precision Manufacturing

It started when Darrell Usher and his son Karl began making wing ribs in his garage for an airplane building hobby he shared with a friend. Soon that friend's budding business – Van's Aircraft Inc. – took off and by 1974, Usher was in the metal manufacturing business.

By 1984, the company had diversified its production – manufacturing more than 7,000 cash registers for the Payless drug store chain. Today, in addition to producing more than 4,000 aircraft parts each month, it manufactures precision machined and sheet metal components for many other industries.

Initially located in North Plains, the company found itself bursting at the seams by 2005 and considered an expansion. Red tape quickly quashed those plans. But a fortuitous vacancy in Forest Grove provided just the right solution.

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In May of 2006, Usher moved into a 25,000 square foot manufacturing facility with 22-foot ceilings, climate control, a covered loading dock and plenty of reserve electrical power. A few years later, it added a 10,000-square-foot building on site. By the end of 2014, it had doubled its employees (now numbering 34).

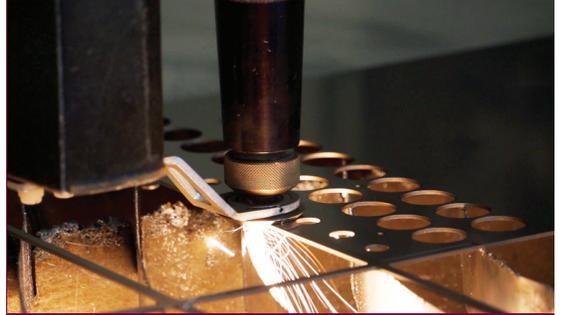
“Our two main reasons for locating here were the square-footage price of the building compared to the rest of the Silicon Forest (Washington County) area, but also the proximity to that area,” says Brad Durham, Usher’s General Manager.

“There is an abundance of highly skilled workers within 20 minutes of our Forest Grove facility,” he says. “All our employees live within a reasonable distance from the city, so we didn’t have to worry about losing employees.”

Also, the company is heavily involved in the aerospace industry, so remaining in the Northwest provides an advantage working with Rockwell Collins, Boeing vendors and, of course, Van’s Aircraft, Durham says.

Another huge advantage is the city’s electricity rates. “In manufacturing we use a lot of electricity and the price per kilowatt hour in Forest Grove is the lowest in the (Portland) metro area,” Durham says. “That makes a big difference to our bottom line.”

There are also aesthetic benefits. “Being a college town, Forest Grove has a nice vibe and holds onto that small-town feel,” he says. “I grew up in Forest Grove and can’t think of a nicer place to raise a family.”



## At a glance

A full-service machine shop, Usher has maintained its niche expertise manufacturing parts for the aircraft industry but has expanded to serve clients in the high tech, automotive, medical, sports and machine tool industries. On any given day, the company’s machinists, welders and engineers may be working on components for Boeing aircraft, Freightliner trucks, dental equipment, prison locks, 3-D printers ...even parts for high-end baseball bats. “If a customer needs it,” says GM Brad Durham, “we do our best to make it.”

Continual adaptation to new machining techniques and metal-forming processes has allowed Usher to expand its services. For example, the company offers hydroforming, which uses high pressure hydraulic fluid to press room temperature metal into a rubber die. It also offers magneforming, a high-velocity cold-forming process that reshapes metal with a high intensity pulsed magnetic field.

Combined with CNC precision machining/turning, laser cutting, sheet metal bending, welding and assembly, these services allow the company to bill itself as a “one-stop manufacturing solution.”

### USHER PRECISION MANUFACTURING

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*A place where businesses and families thrive.*

For information about operating a business in Forest Grove, contact the Forest Grove Economic Development Partnership, (503) 992.3293 or (503) 357.3006, or email [jking@forestgrove-or.gov](mailto:jking@forestgrove-or.gov)