

Boone Company to Create More Wilkes Jobs

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A Boone-based metal fabrication company will bring new life to a former Wilkes furniture plant—and bring 38 jobs, according to Wilkes Economic development officials. PSG Custom Fabrication, based in Boone, purchased the former Key City Furniture building on N.C. 268 West in Wilkesboro, and announced plans to build tornado shelters, safe rooms and other reinforced steel structures at the facility, to be called U.S. Safe Room. The company is owned by Tommy Sofield, who owns US Buildings in Boone and who sold his chemical storage business next to the new plant location back last September. His daughter, Heather, a member of the management team, told the Wilkes Journal-Patriot that the 38 jobs will come over the next two years. County officials said the grant requires that the positions be retained for a minimum of five years. Sofield said wages will range from \$9 per hour for general laborers and \$18-\$20 for foremen, to over \$100,000 for management. No purchase price for the building, with about 200,000 square feet of floor space, was released. The company is applying for a \$750,000 grant from the Community Development Block Grant Fund to offset the \$2.6 million the company plans to spend for improvements and renovations to the building to up fit it for production.

Work will begin in the next few weeks on improvements to the building, and production of the buildings is expected to begin in April. Ms. Sofield told the paper, “We’ll expand and grow into the entire building as the business expands.” US Building produces steel buildings, and has a plant in Wilkes manufacturing carports, garages and small barns over the past year.