



HEART of OREGON

Welder sells “Roseburg Strong” sheet metal cutouts to benefit the shooting victims of Umpqua Community College

On Friday, Oct. 2, one day after the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, Justin Troxel began cranking out sheet metal “Roseburg Strong” signs to rally the community. Almost around the clock—with the help of dozens of volunteers and friends—he was cutting, grinding and

welding signs in the shape of Oregon with a heart cutout where Roseburg is.

Troxel was inspired by a friend at a local shop who had made thousands of Oregon stickers but soon ran out of material. “I wanted to help, so I figured if I could start with \$50 in material, I could make 50 signs,” he says. He covered the material out of his own pocket, hoping

to sell them for \$10 each. But he needed help.

He called his friend Mike Smith, manager at a local metal fabrication shop, The Steel Outlet. The shop donated time on its PlasmaCAM burning table, which rips 400 ipm. It can cut about 30 signs at once. And this work would’ve been ordinary on any other day, except it was anything but: the company cut the signs for free. The Steel Outlet is a six-man business that typically works on trailer chassis and other miscellaneous metal fab orders.

Smith says he started cutting on his own time after The Steel Outlet closed for the day Oct. 2. “We cut until 9 p.m. On Saturday, I was here at 8 a.m. and didn’t stop until 9 p.m. I didn’t even go home Sunday.”

Within an hour of posting the signs on his Facebook page, Troxel sold out.

Back in his garage, Troxel and his crew of volunteers grinded and painted the signs. He used a Millermatic 211 and a Hypertherm Powermax45 to tack on rebar



The Steel Outlet donated time to cut the signs on its PlasmaCAM burning table.



A volunteer grinds a sign's edge before painting in Troxel's garage. Below: Sheet metal keychains.

stakes so the signs could be displayed on front lawns. All of them were sold from his driveway, first-come, first-served. At times, a line of people extended down his street.

The signs are made from both 16-gauge P&O steel and 18-gauge cold-rolled mild steel. They measure 9 in. across by 8 in. tall. Over the course of a week, many other companies had joined in to donate material, tools and shop time. They include Industrial Source, which donated consumables, as well as Bowers Industrial, Lowe's and Home Depot. Local scrap business McGovern Metals donated round stock for the stakes, which were welded onto the signs so they could be propped up in lawns. Local businesses called Troxel almost every hour. Consumable supplier Airgas donated some Hyperthem plasma consumables for use on The Steel Outlet's plasma table, as well as abrasives, welding gases and welding wire, according to Cameron Burks, account manager for Airgas NorPac, the local sales representative for Airgas.

Bigger than expected

"It's turned into something way bigger than I could've done on my own," Troxel says. There had been as many as 70 people at his house offering to haul material, bring in food and handle the money.

In the first week, Troxel sold more than 4,000 signs, yielding \$40,000. All proceeds have gone to the victims' families through the Greater Douglas United

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Welding

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Way Umpqua Strong Fund. Troxel received orders from outside Oregon, too. He was also selling smaller metal keychains. By Oct. 13, he pulled in \$90,000 for the victims.

What started as a way to simply support a grieving community had evolved into an outpouring of generosity that, in many ways, caught Troxel and Smith by surprise. “This reaction wasn’t anything we anticipated,” says Smith. About a week after Troxel began making the signs, on Oct. 8, Umpqua Community College announced on Facebook that the signs would be for sale in its bookstore.

In all this, Troxel hasn’t had time to grieve. He’s directed his energy to “Roseburg Strong” and to manage the outpouring of offers from companies and individuals who want to help. “The hardest part is adjusting to how fast this is all moving,” says Troxel. “We’re making them as fast as we can get material.”

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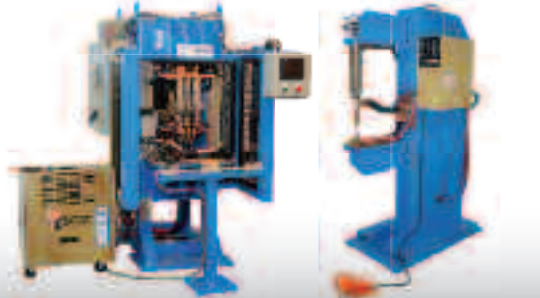
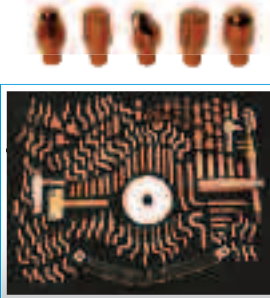
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