

**T**he year 2007 saw the City of Centerville finally solve the the question of what to do with the former Cooper-McGraw Edison facility - it is now back on the tax rolls. Lyle Cowan and Roger Shinn pur-

cause the trailer is parked in the former factory building yet to have its electrical or heating systems finished. Nearby will be the permanent offices, still cluttered with saw dust, drywall sheets and carpentry equipment.

dispatching.

According to the company's Web site, "Ben Shinn Trucking, Inc. was started in the 1930's by Benoni E. Shinn of Knoxville, Iowa. The business is currently run by his sons who helped him grow the business to what it is today. The business is a privately owned family business and has since moved to Eddyville, where the day to day operations are handled.

An additional terminal has opened at exit 133, off of I-35 by Ellsworth, Iowa. Originally employing several people with only a few tractors/trailers, it has grown to include roughly 100 power units with approximately 110 full and part time employees. The company is focused primarily around its over 100 39-foot end dump trailers, which carry dry bulk products, including metals, glass and alloys.

"Ben Shinn Trucking, Inc. is the largest end dump company in Iowa, ranks in the top five nationwide

# Cooper McGraw Edison Building back in use



**Lyle Cowan in front of his temporary office in the former Cooper/McGraw-Edison building**

chased the property under a newly formed company called Centerville Holding, LLC.

The property had sat empty since the mid-1970s and was given to the city five years ago.

A long-running debate with the public and amongst council members themselves included leasing it as storage to Rubbermaid or selling it. Some members of the public charged the building wasn't salvageable or that it should be demolished.

"It's way better than people think," said Cowan of the building as he sat at his cluttered desk in a small camper currently used as an office. Outside the windows it is dark - not because it's night, but be-

cause the building was destroyed by fire at his rural Cincinnati farm, but he couldn't find anything in the right price range. That is when he began talking with Roger Shinn, part owner of the the Eddyville-based Ben Shinn Trucking. The two formed a limited liability company for the purchase.

Cowan now has plenty of room to work on semi-trucks trailers and campers, plus has a prime spot on Highway 5 to display them for sale when he is finished rebuilding them. Many of his repair jobs involve purchasing them over the computer or from insurance companies. They take from two to six weeks to finish. He averages about 40 semi-trucks a year.

The family-owned company of Ben Shinn Trucking will use part of the property as a terminal and for

The building was sold for \$160,000, approximately what the city spent in initial repairs to its roof.

Filling the dimly lit interior are cars, trucks, campers, motorcycles, boats and large trucks - most in for rental storage, but others are there to be rebuilt and offered for sale.

Cowan says the building suits his needs very well. He had been looking for a new facility

**Cowan says the building suits his needs very well. He had been looking for a new facility in Centerville after his own building was destroyed by fire at his rural Cincinnati farm**

and carries a satisfactory safety rating. With its central location, it provides timely service to all areas of the US, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan.

"We haul dry bulk products in 39 foot end dump trailers and run in all 48 states, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Quebec. We have end dumps which are for hire and we have all newer model conventional trucks."

Cowan said Shinn's will have a couple dispatchers, 12 to 15 drivers and 50 to 60 trucks using the Centerville site.

When the city was still debating what to do with the facility, some residents suggested it be used as a "seed" building - a place for new companies to start. That is also happening.

The 194,000 square-foot building has more space than Shinn and Cowan need. They have rented out 13,000 square feet of space to Pat Kaulzarich for making floor joints and rafters. Cowan said as they repair the rest of the structure, more space will open for further renting.

**By Dan Ehl  
Managing Editor**



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