

# Making the move to fabrication

*Initially established as a stone installation business, CNC Stonecrafters recently turned its focus to stone fabrication – investing in state-of-the-art machinery for a successful start*

by Jason Kamery



When Frankie and David Tidwell started CNC Stonecrafters, in Phil Campbell, AL, they were originally just doing installs. Now after the purchase of a FabCenter and SawJet from Northwood, the company is averaging 190 square feet of stone fabrication a day.

When Frankie and David Tidwell started CNC Stonecrafters in Phil Campbell, AL, they were originally just doing installs. Over the past three years though, the company has purchased several machines that allow them to do fabrication as well. “If you had a mistake from another fabricator,

instead of turning the mistake around in two or three hours, or at best two or three days, we were having to wait anywhere from seven to 14 days to get that mistake fixed,” said Kevin Hamby, the shop manager for CNC Stonecrafters. “Now going from hand work to machine work is a night and day difference.”

Among CNC Stonecrafters recent investments are the Northwood FabCenter and the Northwood SawJet so they could manufacture their own products, along with installing them. “Northwood is an exceptional machine company,” said Hamby. “They build a very solid, durable and long-lasting machine. Before I got into the stone



The KMT 65000 Intensifier on CNC Stonecrafters' Sawjet allows the company to have many hours of waterjet cutting.

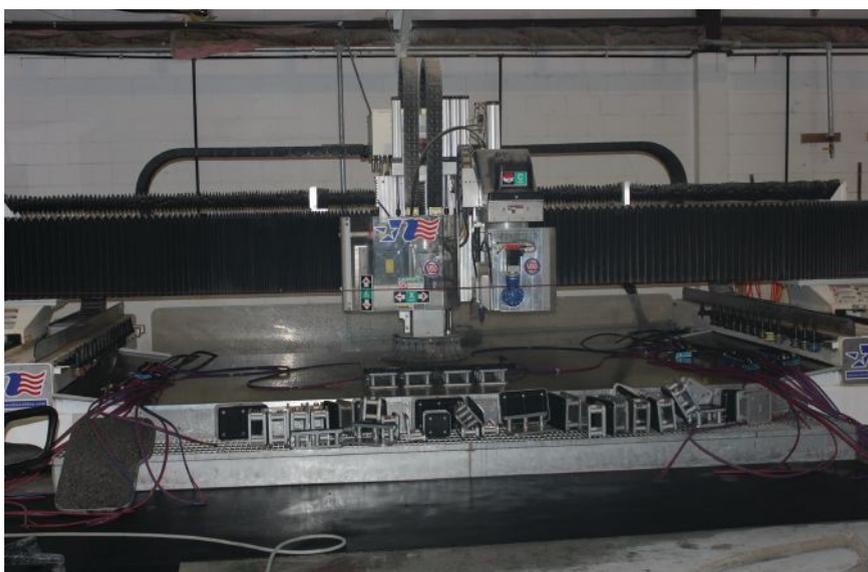


industry I ran two of the Northwood routers for about 20 years on the wood side, so I have known Northwood for a long time, have been buying their products for 25 years and have had nothing but great success with them. The technology they bring to the table now is unbelievable, along with the KMT Intensifier. I can't say any bad things about Northwood or KMT. The technical support you get from the guys is superior, and they are all-around great companies."

The KMT SLV Intensifier on CNC Stonecrafters' SawJet, allows the company to do a substantial amount of waterjet cutting. "The Intensifier is one of the main components in the SawJet," said Hamby. "It's a very reliable tool. You're looking at more than 200 hours before you even have to do any maintenance to the Intensifier, and when you do, it's a very simple process and takes less than 30 minutes."

Serving the Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee areas, the company produces primarily custom made granite countertops. Their facility is 5,000 square feet total. They install one or two sets per day and run 190 square feet of finished product per day, doing all of that with only three men in the shop. CNC Stonecrafters is a family-owned business that produces standard granite countertops, as well as custom stonework. The shop runs one shift with 10 employees, using three to four people to do their installs, depending on the size of the install. The digital templating is done using a Proliner from Prodim and LT 55 from Laser Products. In addition to CNC Stonecrafters' Northwood machines, they have a Sassomeccanica

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Stonecrafters maintains a slab yard outdoors where various stone varieties can be viewed.



The company also offers some quartz products.



Stonecrafters primarily focuses on the residential market, serving the Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee areas.



On average, the company produces seven residential kitchens per week.

edge polisher and a Manzelli lifter, and their tool suppliers are GranQuartz and Granite City Tool.

CNC Stonecrafters is proud of each job they install whether it's 20 square feet or 200 square feet. The company takes pride in its work, and its employ-

ees treat each job as if it were their own home. Besides residential areas, Hamby and his team recently worked on the Ole Miss University locker rooms. "The Ole Miss work is something we are really proud of that we have been working on for about seven

months now. Any time you get to work with a university like that and you get to see and meet people and have a connection where you can go to a football game and say, 'Hey, I redid all of this.' It's something that I am personally very proud of."



Each kitchen typically measures approximately 75 square feet.

### CNC Stonecrafters Phil Campbell, AL

For the long term, Stonecrafters intends to keep expanding on its success. "We would like to keep growing and keep everyone in our location supplied with granite and keep giving them the best price we can give them," Hamby said. "We love doing what we do, and we try to carry that out through the whole process and treat people like family." □

*Type of Work:* Primarily residential and some commercial  
*Machinery:* a FabCenter and a SawJet — both from Northwood in Louisville, KY; an edge polisher from SassoMechanica of Italy and a Manzelli vacuum lifter; tools and accessories from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA, and Granite City Tool of St. Cloud, MN  
*Number of Employees:* 10  
*Production Rate:* 190 square feet a day; seven kitchens per day, each measuring approximately 75 square feet



**"By switching from hand tools to the Northwood Machine combination waterjet SawJet and FABCENTER, the advancement in technology, the computerized CNC, the edging and profiling tooling, we have completed projects in hours instead of taking days. Everyone is looking for the perfect cut, and now we can deliver it every time, every day."**



In 2006, Northwood introduced the SawJet, and launched a revolution in the stone cutting industry. The Northwood SawJet has opened up a world of productivity and flexibility that is unprecedented.



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