



Paragon Precision Metals, LLC **Wichita State University | Emerging**

The leadership and persistence of a business owner shape the success of a business. Bob Williford established Paragon Precision Metal in 2019 in McPherson, Kansas. The focal points for the company are to invest in the future of its employees and their families, support the communities in which it operates and bring value to the customers it serves. While there are multiple operational strategies at work to support these visions, a key element is providing high-quality parts and services, utilizing state-of-the-art equipment, in a way that brings tangible value to customers. Paragon has demonstrated its ability to achieve this goal in the community, the state of Kansas, and surrounding states.

With the help of Kansas Small Business Development Center advisor Frank Choriego, Williford was able to work through and navigate startup-related concerns. Expanding on the services provided, Williford was able to access specific Kansas SBDC training programs, find SBA financing opportunities, and even network with local manufacturers. Paragon, which started commercial production in early 2020, was able to survive through the pandemic and grow into a self-sustaining business, in part due to assistance from the Kansas Small Business Development Center.

Through Williford's commitment to his vision, as well as the Kansas SBDC services and advising from Choriego, Paragon has achieved a six-figure sales month.

"Our SBDC advisor, Frank Choriego, has significant experience and history in the industry which we are entering," Williford, said. "His background and networking within the industry were beneficial to finding industrial customers and introductions into the network. The SBDC training programs were exceptional as it related to the 'know-how' of starting a new business. Great responsiveness to questions and assistance at getting issues resolved was also valuable during our startup."

Williford offered some key insight. He said, "Don't underestimate the importance of cash flow, don't overcommit your capacity, and always include timing for the unknown issues. In a startup business, slow and steady is a great foundation for sustained growth."