



Contracts to Boost Local Company

By Randy Griffith
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WINDBER – Inside the sprawling desert-camouflaged tent complex, workers bend over a line of computer systems projecting military targets on 5-foot screens. The state-of-the-art Marine Corps. Combat operations center is not in Iraq's Al-Anbar Province, but set up inside a former door-and-window factory near Windber. Barely a year after setting up shop in the plant, Coherent Systems International has expanded to 35 employees developing on-the-ground warfare systems.

Government contracts to be announced today by U.S. Rep. John Murtha, D-Johnstown, will allow the local operation to expand even more, said Mike Ianieri, chief executive officer. "We expect to really double that size by the end of the year," Ianieri said. Details of the new contracts will be released today at Coherent's plant at 99 Spruce Street in Paint Township. The plant was owned by Milliken Millworks, successor to Iron City Door and Sash. Coherent is not the only local company that benefits from its government contracts, Ianieri said.

"Kuchera (Defense Systems) is our major supplier," Ianieri said. "It builds all of our hardware for our contracts." Most of Coherent's work involves scientists, engineers and testers who design systems to government specifications. "Our specialty is precision targeting and electronic warfare systems," Ianieri said. "We develop and implement systems that help the war fighter." Once the design is on paper, Coherent turns to subcontractors to build the components. Parts such as armor plating and bulletproof windows for command vehicles are converted from standard trucks at the Windber plant. Many of the components come from Kuchera, Ianieri said. "They don't make the Ford trucks, but they make the reinforced hinges you need for those doors," Ianieri said. In fact, Coherent set up plants in Windber and Uniontown to be near Kuchera's Windber operation, Ianieri said. Coherent leases the plant from a Kuchera subsidiary that acquired it in 2005 for \$800,000 from Milliken. The door-maker then moved to Sidman.

Coherent Systems International Corporation
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