



MARK'S CUSTOM SIGNS inc.

A SIGN OF QUALITY SINCE 1977

The Guthrie family has already noticed sparks of interest and talent from members of the next generation who have grown up in and around the goings-on at Mark's Custom Signs, Inc. Jeremy and Diane Guthrie's daughters, 11 year old Jaci and 9 year old Addison have spent a lot of time at the business watching their dad, Jeremy Guthrie do vehicle wraps and their grandpa, Mark Guthrie, pinstripe trucks and fabricate a variety of signs.

The art of hand painting is the foundation for the Guthrie's sign business which started in 1977 at the former Guthrie Trailer Sales. Mark provided a lettering service at the business that was started by his father, Kenneth Guthrie.

Mark's Custom Signs, Inc. moved to its current location in 1980. The actual address is 67B NE 20 Rd, which is located just off US Highway 281 about a mile north of 24th and Main. During the mid-1980's and early 1990's Mark and his wife Denise along with their three sons, Jeremy, Dustin, and Blake, would enjoy family vacations to motorcycle rallies across the country. Mark would set up a booth and pinstripe touring style motorcycles while the rest of the family took in the sites. Mark said, "This provided a great opportunity to see the country while earning income."

In the early stages of the business, Denise recalls praying each day for the next job to come in. Over the past 35 plus years, God has provided time after time.

Technology drove the business from reliance upon the hand-painted technique to computer generated graphics and the variety of signs and the production rate exploded. "This creates a good working relationship for my dad and me," Jeremy said. "I give him the hand painted work and he in turn passes the majority of the computer work to me."

Mark's Custom Signs now offers vinyl lettering, decals, banners, canvas prints, digital printing, illuminated signs, LED digital signs, neon sign design & service, vehicle wraps, custom painting, graphic and logo design, license plates, dimensional letters, pinstriping, truck lettering, large scale logos, commercial awnings and full sign service.



Mark & Denise Guthrie, pictured at left, are the founders of Mark's Custom Signs. Mark's son, Jeremy, and his wife, Diane, have also taken an active role in the operations of the family-owned company. www.marksigns.com

Jeremy, whose interest in design was whetted at an early age, said he always had an eye for art, particularly graphic design. "This attraction to design was probably due to being around that industry as a child myself," he said. "I decided in high school to pursue a degree in graphic design and focus on the sign market." Jeremy attended Evangel University and Barton Community College and has his associate degree in graphic design. "I hope someday one of our daughters will have an interest in the sign business," Jeremy said "but most importantly we want them to find a career path they enjoy."

Mark and Denise were the only two employees in the beginning. And while they still keep their hands in the action, all the Guthries rely on Barb Erdman, Cody Huddleston, Billy Widiger & Ky Heeke.

Diane, who started at the business just after she married Jeremy in 1999, noted "our employees are very reliable and talented. All of us operate with a high level of integrity in what we do. We believe in complete honesty with our customers to give them a fair deal and a quality product."

"Our employees are our biggest asset," Jeremy commented. "We would not be able to take care of as many customers as we do without their dedication. All of us do professional work and we stand behind it," Jeremy added. "We value our customers and work hard to make sure we provide a valuable service to this community as well as to our customers nationwide."

"In our work," he continued, "there is a skillset that takes time to develop due to the many different products we produce. Our employees care about the products we send out and value the relationships we have built with our customers."

Jeremy noted, "It is interesting how the industry has changed over the years and opened up areas such as digital outdoor advertising." The business' biggest LED digital advertising sign creation was for the Kansas State Fair, but local residents see many other examples throughout town. These include the Great Bend Convention Center and Brit Spough Park and Zoo.

While the outdoor-advertising signs entail some of the company's biggest jobs, it handles many smaller tasks too. "A person doesn't have to go to a big city or turn to the internet; we can do it all right here in Great Bend." Diane said. "If it has anything to do with lettering or graphics, we can do it." She also noted that Great Bend has been a good home for Mark's Custom Signs. "Our city has been easy to work with and fully supportive of what we do."

Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The company's main service territory is a 60-mile radius of Great Bend. However, they travel all throughout Kansas and ship products anywhere in the country. —

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