



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Mayor Jacobs Small Business Series Focuses on The Metal Guys**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed Brandon Lawson, co-owner of The Metal Guys Pits, as part of his small business series. Lawson and business partner Hayes Walton have turned their custom metal work fabrication business into a barbecue pit building phenomenon.

Mayor Jacobs' bi-weekly small business series is comprised of video interviews airing Wednesdays on the county and Mayor's various social media platforms. The discussions offer folks the chance to talk about what they do; highlight their work; and share any future plans.

"We kind of started just in our garage cutting metal signs on our cnc table but when covid hit in 2020 our sign sales really took a hit," Lawson said. "Our neighboring business came over and said we want a smoker built for us. Can you do it? Well yeah we can do it. So we started building it and a guy came in and bought it. We started building a second one for them and the same thing happened again ... and we realized we were onto something."

Lawson is a third-generation ironworker but decided to go a slightly different route with metal fabrication. Lawson and Walton have paired their love of barbecue with their skilled metal trades while also using the latest in social media marketing to grow their business. TMG Pits now produces more than 100 units a year and has made additional hires to meet demands.

TMG Pits specializes in making their products unique for the customer, including custom lettering, branding and special features not found in traditional smoke pits. For Lawson, creating these pieces is a passion that's smoked in tradition.

"If you are familiar with the barbecue community, it's just an awesome community. My grandfather had an actual pit he built so I've always loved it. I've grown up in it. A lot of times we'll just do big cookouts here and invite customers over and when these guys come over to get their smokers, they're just ecstatic," said Lawson.

The Mayor and Lawson further discussed the innovative techniques used to create the barbecue pits, how much of the pits are created in their Knoxville shop and how social media marketing has given them an advantage over their competition.

To hear more of what was said during the interview, check out the [video](#).

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