Booming business

C.A. Guitars plans to relocate to downtown area

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LAFAYETTE — Composite Acoustic Guitars of Lafayette is on the move. The company purchased a warehouse last spring on Cypress Street and is planning to move its production lines into downtown Lafayette, where it plans to completely relocate by next fall, said Denise Edwards, company spokesman.

A team of nine luthiers currently produce two composite guitars a day from a warehouse on Buchanan Street in downtown Lafayette. The corporate offices are located on St. Mary Boulevard.

"Now the company will do everything at one site. It's a necessary move for the company, which began producing two guitars a week and selling its product on the open market last year. National recording artists such as ZZ Top, Puddle of Mudd and Shania Twain purchased guitars from the Lafayette company in recent months.

"We've got back orders piling up and we're rolling in from Germany, Australia, Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom," Edwards said. "Within a year, we've outgrown our accommodations. And we're showing no signs of slowing down."

Mike Feigler of Fig Tree Music, who is an ambassador of Caffery Parkway Attribution of the company's success to its unique product. Luthiers used birch, mahogany, cedar, rosewood and other woods to build acoustic guitars for more than a century. Composite Acoustics Guitars co-founder Ellis Seel, a former rocket scientist who designed nose cones for NASA, used his knowledge of composite materials to create a guitar made almost entirely of fiberglass and graphite.

"It has great tone and is impervious to weather conditions — like humidity, heat and cold — that can change the sound of wood guitars," Feigler said. "It's the ultimate performance guitar that will sound as good 20 years from now as it does today."

Company officials have their sights set on downtown Lafayette to be their base of operations for years to come, Edwards said.

"These guitars are little pieces of our culture being shipped and played around the world," he said.

Arts and culture are at the core of downtown Lafayette's development initiatives, said Kathy Webrich with the Lafayette Development Authority.

"The nature of the product they're producing fits right in line," Webrich said.

Webrich said she's most enthusiastic about C.A. Guitars, being a Lafayette-based company purchasing the former Begnau's Car Co., which has been vacant for many years.

"The old warehouse district along Jefferson, Cypress and Grant streets hasn't seen anything like this in a long time," Webrich said.