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Four years post-fire, Wendell August Forge launches NFL-themed products *The Progress Fund, Enterprise Bank, Commonwealth of PA financed reconstruction*

Mercer, PA – January 22, 2014 – Just four years after the Wendell August Forge went up in smoke, the historic Grove City company approaches the biggest game of the year with a new facility and a fresh product line that celebrates our fascination with football.

Wendell August Forge was expanding its sports-themed metalcraft in 2010. The company got its largest order ever, to forge 20,000 aluminum tickets for the Pittsburgh Penguins to commemorate the demolition of the Civic Arena – and two days later its production facility burned down.

When Wendell August Forge President F.W. "Will" Knecht IV saw "the dark plumes of smoke up to the heavens," he says, "it was absolutely surreal." But it wasn't hopeless. "I knew God was in control and it would work out."

No one was hurt, and just a few score of the 4,000 original steel dies upon which the forge relies were lost in the fire. The forge temporarily relocated to a nearby industrial park. A month after the fire, Will says, "we were able to deliver 20,000 tickets to the Pittsburgh Penguins."

The company, founded in 1923, turned after the fire to Enterprise Bank and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the financing needed to build a new, \$6.75 million, 52,000-square-foot forge and headquarters. Enterprise Bank called in The Progress Fund to loan \$500,000 needed to span a gap in the bridge financing.

Now Wendell August Forge Inc. is distributing ornaments featuring the logos of all 32 NFL teams, with an entire NFL-themed homegating series set to launch in 2014 through a collaboration with an NFL licensee. Almost four years post-fire, employment is up from 70 to 110.

Says Will: "I couldn't have done the project without Enterprise Bank, The Progress Fund and the Governor."

To interview Will, or arrange a tour of the forge, call (724) 748-9500 or email to wknecht@wendell.com.

For further information on The Progress Fund, call (724) 216-9160, or visit www.progressfund.org.

The Progress Fund is a vigorous non-profit loan fund that creates jobs and improves communities by providing entrepreneurial coaching and capital to small businesses in the travel & tourism industry. The Progress Fund serves 40 counties of Pennsylvania, the State of West Virginia, Western Maryland, and Appalachian Ohio. The Progress Fund was founded in 1997, and has made 428 loans totaling more than \$50.5 million to 261 enterprises, creating or preserving more than 3,170 jobs. The Progress Fund is an Equal Opportunity Lender.