

A local entrepreneur's paintball business has grown so fast he plans to turn a former indoor motocross arena into an indoor paintball arena in LaOtto in July.

The building at 6485 Merchants Drive in LaOtto will become the new home for Mike Schlemmer's paintball equipment company, TradeMyGun.com Inc. Schlemmer said total investment in the new site is more than \$1 million.

TradeMyGun.com launched in April 2007 as a Web site. Schlemmer said it's now well-known as one of the largest online resellers of used paintball equipment.

Through the Web site, paintball players can sell used equipment to the company. Based on the equipment's specifications, the Web site generates an offer, Schlemmer said. If the potential seller agrees, he prints out a shipping label to mail the equipment to TradeMyGun.com in exchange for money or store credit. The Web site sells new and used paintball equipment.

With the LaOtto location, Schlemmer said TradeMyGun.com can expand from just online sales to a retail store. The new location will also include an indoor recreational paintball field that can host parties.

About 15 to 20 mostly part-time jobs will be added to support the retail and recreational paintball operations when TradeMyGun.com opens the new location the first week of July.

The LaOtto site will operate as TradeMyGun.com's Paintball Plex, Schlemmer said.

David Nugent, from BND Commercial Real Estate Solutions, represented Farmers & Merchants Bank, which owned the property before the sale Wednesday. Nugent said the paintball business was a perfect fit for the space with a retail store and indoor dirt-floored area.

"(Schlemmer)'s a user who could go in and make use of it the way it is," Nugent said.

Originally, paintball was just one of more than a dozen product lines sold on Schlemmer's online business, TMS Wholesale.

Schlemmer said TradeMyGun.com has been such a success for the company – meeting and exceeding all expectations – that on April 25 the company was spun off into an independent company. TMS Wholesale will continue to operate at 5231 Industrial Road, its current location.

In 2006, TMS Wholesale reported \$2.4 million in annual revenue. In a story from January 2007, Schlemmer said he hoped the launch of TradeMyGun.com would allow TMS Wholesale to double its revenues for the year. The Web site did exceptionally well in its first year, Schlemmer said, although he declined to give specific revenue figures.

"We met and exceeded our expectations," Schlemmer said.

*Jenni Glenn of The Journal Gazette contributed to this story.*