

Laid-off machinist succeeds on his own

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As a former U.S. marine who served in Vietnam, Eugene Jamison, a 38-year-old machinist, considers himself made of pretty tough stuff.

But even Jamison, who has three children to support, says he "felt a little lost" when he was laid off in early 1981 from Automotive Pattern — his third layoff in 20 months.

A year earlier, he had been laid off from Chrysler Corp., and eight months before that, from Ford Motor Co.

So Jamison said he mustered the self-discipline he learned in the Marines and became an entrepreneur — a type of move that Michigan Employment Security Commission officials say may be partially responsible for the dramatic drop in state unemployment in February.

"I just felt I had to do something, that's all," Jamison said. "I thought the best way to do it was to just look after myself, rather than depend on someone else. The Marine Corps gives us that discipline — when you've got to get something done, you get it done."

IN MAY 1981, Jamison borrowed a drill press from a friend, set up shop in



Free Press Photo by JOHN COLLIER

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the basement and garage of his Brown-

stown Township home, and "started

knocking on doors, looking for work to

do on my own — any type of machin-

ing work."

Although "it was pretty rough,"

Jamison said, by the end of that year,

he and his wife — who handles their

company's book work — had grossed about \$18,000.

Last April, using a \$30,000 loan from Manufacturers Bank, Jamison moved his machine shop to a defunct high school building in Southgate, bought more than a dozen pieces of used machinery and hired several employees.

About six months ago, "things started picking up," he said. Jamison Industries now employs five full-time machinists — including Jamison and two apprentices — two part-time machinists and Jamison's wife. Two of the employees had been laid off and two quit other jobs to go to work for Jamison Industries.

Jamison said he grossed about \$240,000 last year and that he is optimistic that his company will continue to expand. He plans to hire two more machinists, "maybe in a year," he said.

Although some of its jobs are auto-related, Jamison Industries also manufactures tank parts as a subcontractor for a firm that sells the parts to General Dynamics Corp. in Warren.

"I just go out and knock on doors," Jamison said. "There's a lot of work out there, all you have to do is go out and find it."