



**40 UNDER 40**

November 2002

**PITTSBURGH**  
magazine

**Wade Hampton II** | Age 29  
Owner, Swade Welding

In 1993, Wade Hampton had left Pittsburgh and was working on a Memphis, Tenn., assembly line making tractor trailers for \$18 dollars an hour. He realized that his line was turning out 10 trailers a day that were selling for \$100,000 a piece, making a million dollars a day -- for someone else.

He decided to get on the winning end of that equation by starting his own business. After spending several years learning the welding trade on the job, Hampton started looking to launch a new business, but Tennessee wasn't the place. For one thing, there were too many big corporations squeezing the little guy out. For another, Hampton saw construction opportunities booming with plans for new stadiums and other projects.

"I wanted to help build my hometown," the Penn Hills native says of another motivation to come back. "Since Pittsburgh is growing and building, and I was growing and building, I figured we could do it together."

Such was the beginning of Swade Welding in 1998. The Minority Enterprise Corp. helped him launch the business, which started as a mobile welding service specializing in heavy equipment repairs, avoiding the need to transport large broken machines to a shop to be fixed.

Hampton and his company expanded into fabrication and manufacturing three years later, and he hopes to expand his steel-frame-erection work as the business grows, although repair remains the core function of the business.

The Munhall-based operation has six to seven projects going on for five companies across the region and expects to get more work in 2003.

Hampton says he's optimistic about his business, and with good reason. He's several years ahead of where his business plan says should be right now.

"I just see nothing but success ahead," he says, as the mechanic buzz of his business at work continues in the background. "I'm not satisfied until I get my million a day."

NOVEMBER 2002

**CELEBRATE OUR FOURTH ANNUAL HONOR ROLL OF THE AREA'S YOUNG MOVERS AND SHAKERS**

# PITTSBURGH

www.wqed.org



**40  
UNDER  
40**

