

Steeple builders outdo themselves

CAMPBELLSVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A Campbellsville company famous for its church steeples is going to try to achieve even greater heights on its latest project.

A steeple 28 feet square at its base and rising 152 feet is under construction at Campbellsville Industries, according to spokespeople for the company.

The structure will grace the top of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn.

The New Haven church was completed in 1874 — except, that is, for a steeple.

"They ran out of money 100 years ago to finish the church," said William Van Tasseil, supreme treasurer of the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic fraternal order that is cur-

rently engaged in restoration of the church.

It is possible that the steeple, made from zinc on aluminum, could be the largest prefabricated steeple ever built, company officials believe.

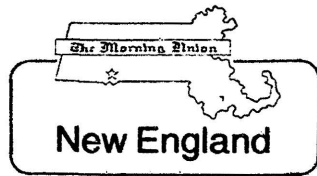
"It's the largest one we know about, and it's our largest as far as dollar volume is concerned," said Jerry Bennett, president of Campbellsville Industries.

Most steeples are 7 to 10 feet square and 35 to 50 feet tall and cost \$9,000 to \$13,000.

The St. Mary's steeple will cost \$250,000.

The architect directing the renovation picked the Campbellsville plant because of its one-of-a-kind service.

"They're unique in the fact they'll



take a project and completely fabricate a steeple for a church," said Bruce Deimers, assistant to architect Kevin Roche of New Haven.

Until now, the largest steeple built by Campbellsville was 24 feet square and 120 feet tall.

The task of building an even larger steeple has not been too formidable, Bennett said.

"We like challenges and we put a lot of confidence in our craftsmen here, probably some of the best

craftsmen in the country," he said.

"There aren't many things we can't do when it comes to steeple reproduction.

"Having experience on various other projects of immense size, we have learned quite a bit."

The steeple, designed in Neo-Gothic style with louvered panels and 20,000 teardrop-shaped shingles made to look like slate, will be topped by an 11-foot-tall Celtic cross covered with 23-karat gold leaf, which also will be made by Campbellsville Industries.

To transport the steeple, it will be broken down into sections, hauled 1,200 miles, then put in place by a crane with a 280-foot boom.

Campbellsville Industries, which has a payroll of about 55, also

designs, makes and installs crucifixes, crosses, cornices, columns, cupolas, clock towers, shutters, louvers and domes.

But 70 percent of its business is making steeples.

Campbellsville has a contract to build an even bigger steeple for the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala., Bennett said.

That steeple will be 220 feet tall, cost more than \$350,000, house a carillon of bronze bells weighing more than 50,000 pounds, and will have an elevator and control booth for the carillonneur.

Why give