

# 2021 SUCCESS STORY

BOWMAN



NORTH DAKOTA  
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## PEACOCK MERCANTILE

**HETTINGER** -- The Peacock Mercantile is an upscale coffee shop, bakery, deli, and gift store. Peacock Mercantile's story began when Pam Burch purchased a building in October of 2017 after recently moving to the area.

In the beginning stages, Pam was challenged by naysayers who repeatedly told her the idea of a mercantile would never work in Hettinger. Thankfully, however, she didn't give up. Peacock Mercantile and its success has been a journey of perseverance for Pam and

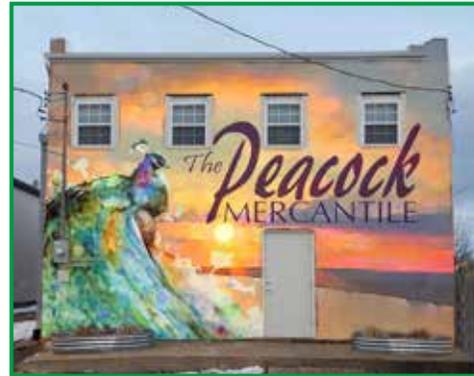
her staff; their dedication will be rewarded this spring when they celebrate their third anniversary.

"We've grown year over year, seeing growth in sales, growth in our staff, growth in the overall reach to new and existing customers, growth in our gift line, and growth in our food and drink menu," Pam noted.

When she first purchased her building, Pam reached out to the Hettinger Chamber of Commerce for assistance in opening her business. The Chamber is where she was informed about the North Dakota Small Business Development Centers (ND SBDC). Having never owned or operated a storefront business in this particular industry, Pam was looking for guidance from any and every place she could find it.

She was connected with Laura Weber, business advisor at the Bowman SBDC. Laura was able to point Pam in the right direction when it came to loans, grants, and other means of funding. Pam and Laura had to work together to creatively think about how to obtain funding for the Mercantile. Together they were able successfully to secure funding through Dakota Western Bank, as well as the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP).

"Laura was an invaluable resource in the early financial planning stages of making our dream of a small coffee shop turn



into a reality. She was always willing to meet with me and answer my questions, calm my fears, and give a word of encouragement to keep on. She offered resource options that I didn't know about and was a great guide and mentor," Pam said about the

assistance she received from the SBDC.

When asked if she would recommend the ND SBDC services to other small business owners, Pam expressed that it never hurts to get advice and guidance from multiple entities when you are starting something in a field you've never worked in. She advised that one should always be humble and willing to learn from everyone around them.

Over the years, Pam has learned about what it takes to be an entrepreneur from the ground up. She urges everyone with a goal or a dream to do their homework, research, and be willing to reach out to anyone they can think of for guidance and direction.

"Don't ever think you have it all figured out. Always be willing to take advice and criticism - constructive or otherwise - because you will learn from it all if you are willing to have open ears," advised Pam.

She pays tribute to community support in Hettinger and attributes that support to the success of Peacock Mercantile. Since the beginning, they've always been the number one supporter of the business. "The community appreciates what the





Mercantile has brought to their rural town and have just done what any other person would do when they appreciate something - they have kept their spending local and then voiced their thankfulness. I think their words of encouragement are by far the greatest gift to me. It inspires me to keep going and keep growing and moving on to the next great idea."

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, Pam was blown away by the support her business received from the community. Once COVID-19 hit, the Mercantile put together the Blessing Box campaign. This campaign was born out of the idea of how to use the extra food in the Mercantile's coolers and freezers so it wouldn't go to waste because of the decreased sales. They partnered with social services and volunteers helped deliver food each week to the elderly. At first Pam thought that they would maybe only have be able to continue for two-week's worth of meals, but to her surprise they were able to keep the campaign going for six weeks. She explained, "In the midst of the initial lockdowns of the pandemic, people came in with small and large donations for our Blessing Box campaign and begged us

not to close. Every single donation made a difference and pulled us through the first lockdown."

Since first opening its doors in May of 2018, Peacock Mercantile has grown leaps and bounds. Most recently, Pam hired a local grant writer in Hettinger, Melana Howe. Howe and Adams County Development Corporation were able to help Pam successfully obtain a USDA equipment grant that will allow them to

expand into the last 700 square feet of their building. Peacock Mercantile plans to use this space to create a meeting and event space. It will allow them to expand their catering business and further support the community with a great space to create memorable moments.



It goes without saying that Pam and her staff at Peacock Mercantile sure know what they are doing. We are excited to work right alongside them as they thrive in the future.

