

SUCCESS STORY

GRAND FORKS 2022



BRENT'S PIT STOP

GRAFTON, ND – Gene Loftsgard has always been passionate about the automotive industry and dreamed of owning his own business. In the summer of 2018, he realized that dream when he purchased Brent's Pit Stop, a full-service gas station located in Grafton, ND. "I worked at the gas station in high school and always dreamed of buying it one day," Loftsgard said. "When the opportunity presented itself, I knew I had to seize it."

Loftsgard officially took over the reins to Brent's Pit Stop in October 2018 and has served the Grafton community ever since. In addition

to offering gas and diesel fuel, the business also provides tire sales and light mechanic work. "We wanted to offer a one-stop-shop for all of our customers' automotive needs," Loftsgard said. "And it seems to be working – we've been able to expand our repair side of the business and have seen a lot of success since opening."


But starting a new business is never easy, and Loftsgard has faced his fair share of challenges. "Two years into our new business, we were faced with the pandemic, soaring fuel prices, and financing issues," Loftsgard said. "It was

a tough time, but we were determined to push through it."

In order to keep the business afloat during these challenging times, Loftsgard turned to the ND Small Business Development Centers (ND SBDC) for help. "We heard about the SBDC through Choice Financial in Grafton and decided to take advantage of their services," Loftsgard said. "We expected some guidance with our business plan and overall business ideas, but the advising sessions were way more in-depth than we expected. Nicole Evans was a wealth of information and really helped us get our business off the ground."

Through the added capacity of the ND SBDC's Covid support team, Greg Syrup was also able to assist Loftsgard in securing an SBA EIDL loan to help keep the business open during the pandemic. "Without the help of the Grand Forks SBDC, we wouldn't be in business today," Loftsgard said. "They were a huge resource for us, and we are so grateful for their assistance."

Loftsgard attributes his success to his hard work and dedication



to serving the community. “We work long hours and always try new ideas to serve the public better. And the community has been incredibly supportive of our business – we couldn’t have done it without them.”

His advice for aspiring entrepreneurs: “If you decide to pursue an endeavor, keep pushing toward your goals, keep making those calls, and keep knocking on doors. Do whatever it takes to get it done, but don’t burn any bridges in the process because you never know when you will go back that way again.”

Loftsgard also highly recommends the ND SBDC to other small business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs. “They are a huge wealth of information when getting started and beyond.



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