

2019 SUCCESS STORY

BOWMAN



NORTH DAKOTA
SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

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BRONSON'S MARKETPLACE AND LIQUOR

BOWMAN - The rural grocery industry is an ever changing and increasingly challenging industry to be a part of and Kelly and Kim Kessler have proven they are up for that challenge.

The Kessler's enjoy small business ownership and say that it offers, "Satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment. Enjoying your career is important, and by running your own business you have control of over that."

They saw an opportunity for continuing to control their careers when in 2015, Bowman peaked their interest for a potential expansion of their current operations that are based in Beulah. The grocery store in Bowman was exploring options for transitioning and Bronson's was the right fit at the right time. They took over ownership in May of 2016 and began construction on a new store located on

E HWY 12. The new store opened February 2017.

Challenge/Solution

After a referral from the Bowman County Development Corporation, the Kessler's were referred to the ND SBDC and specifically looking for assistance with loan packaging. Their SBDC

advisor's knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of programs as well as application procedures, helped to ensure that the project could continue to move forward with the best circumstances in place.

"We were able to lock into an interest rate for 20 years, which at the time was a worry about what interest rates would do," said Kim about their loan package.

"Our SBA loan guarantee was a feeling of security with the risk we were taking on with this new business.

Their SBDC advisor, Laura Weber, agreed that there are options when it comes to financing and you have to feel comfortable with your package before moving forward.

"Kelly and Kim were willing to put in the work and research to really go after financing options that were going to provide the best leverage and ability to succeed." Weber also indicated this to be as important as any other element of building a business.

The Kessler's encourage other entrepreneurs to explore their options when it comes to financing and consult with the ND SBDC for assistance in understanding how these programs can best help.

"Shop for interest rates. Be confident that you are receiving the best interest rate by finding what works best for you," says Kim.

The new location created a much larger operating space and a need to double their staff, now employing 19 full time employees and 16 part time employees. Kelly and Kim value



their employees and know they would not be able to operate two locations without empowered and engaged staff and they are proud to offer benefit packages that are not typical to their industry. The growth of staff is one of the biggest indicators of growth for the business as well.

Kim shared, “These employees are trained well and they care about what they are doing, which in turn creates a better grocery store. Our company has grown because of the people working, and because of the good decisions they make for our business every day.”

Impact

“We attribute our success to upholding high standards.” Kim believes that is how they best overcame the biggest hurdle of operating in a new location.

Bronson’s Marketplace strives to provide a great shopping experience to their customers and a comfortable place for

their employees. It also understands that there are challenges working to please the public.

“It is hard to please everyone, and at the end of the day, you have to be confident that you have done your best, and have been fair to everyone with decisions that must be made. And then ‘let it go’ if possible.”

They want to put their best foot forward and know they did all they could to create a relationship with their customers and employees.

They spent extensive time working through training while continuing to operate a good grocery store using those high standards to attract more people to the area for their quality products and the people that operate the store. They serve a customer base that has a large radius and they continue to feel and appreciate the support that they have received from the community and surrounding area.

“The Bowman community is extremely

supportive which has made this venture and risk worthy of taking. We have a supportive customer base.”

And, there are big things coming in Bronson’s Marketplace and Liquor at both of their locations as they will be introducing online shopping in the near future. The opportunity to serve their clientele in a new and convenient way is going to be worth the extensive investment it will take to cover software, additional fees and adjustments in staffing and responsibilities.

“Smaller communities do not typically have the large customer base of recurring online shopping, but we are hoping to make it a success in our rural areas and are excited to bring this to Bowman and Beulah,” Kim says.

These upcoming plans fit in with continuing to evolve the business and follow what consumers are looking for.

