

# SUCCESS STORY

## BISMARCK 2023



### DL'S STRAWBERRY KOOLER

VELVA - DL's Strawberry Cooler is a popular bar and grill that holds a special significance for its current owner, Donna Lynn Knutson. Donna had previously worked at the establishment when it was known as the Strawberry Cooler under her mother's ownership. After ten years, Donna's mother made the decision to sell, and Donna, having gained firsthand experience of the dedication and hard work required to run a business, recognized the potential when the opportunity arose in the spring of 2022. However, being a science teacher for over thirty years, she was unsure how to navigate the business world and

realized she needed assistance to get started.

Donna's vision for the bar and grill was to create a more kid and family-friendly environment. She renamed it DL's Strawberry Cooler, for Donna Lynn's, symbolizing the personal touch she had planned. Her goal was to establish a warm and welcoming atmosphere that would appeal to a broader customer base.

As a first-time business owner, Donna encountered various challenges, one of which was managing the financial aspects. Like many small

business owners, she found accounting overwhelming. Fortunately, Donna discovered the North Dakota Small Business Development Centers (ND SBDC) through Peoples State Bank in Velva, ND. She sought guidance from a business advisor, who helped her create a business plan and provided support throughout the loan process.

Thanks to the assistance of the ND SBDC, Donna was able to develop a solid business plan that led to securing a loan and setting her on the path to success. "I obtained the loan and had a business plan to follow," she explained. Armed with a well-structured plan, Donna got started on her improvement plans, expanding the offerings



to cater to families and the surrounding communities. The result was a happy customer base, great food, and a fun place to be.

Since becoming the new owner, Donna has experienced remarkable growth, attracted a larger clientele, and garnered tremendous support from the community. She has been able to complete her planned transformation, providing an enhanced and enjoyable atmosphere for her customers.

Expressing gratitude towards her community, Donna said, "They have not only patronized us but also offered encouragement." Her positive experience with the ND SBDC led her to recommend the services to other small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. She emphasized how the organization provides a starting point for individuals

without financial or business experience, and she encouraged others not to be afraid to try, assuring them that there are wonderful people who will support them.

Donna Lynn Knutson's success story exemplifies the importance of seeking assistance when venturing into entrepreneurship. With the guidance of ND SBDC

and her business advisor, she overcame the challenges she faced and built a thriving and prosperous business. DL's Strawberry Kooler stands as a testament to Donna's determination, the support of the community, and the valuable resources offered by organizations like the ND SBDC.



## Restaurant & Bar • Strawberry Lake, Ruso, NC



[www.ndsbdc.org](http://www.ndsbdc.org)