

# SUCCESS STORY

## MINOT 2023



### TURTLE MOUNTAIN VETERINARY SERVICE

**BOTTINEAU** - In 2005, Dr. Jill Franks embarked on a journey into small business ownership, starting her own veterinary practice in Bottineau, North Dakota. Fresh out of vet school, she answered an ad from the Bottineau Economic Development Corporation recruiting a veterinarian. Intrigued by the community and the area, Jill decided to take the leap into entrepreneurship, even though she had no prior experience in running a business.

In August 2005, Turtle Mountain Veterinary Service was born, providing both large and small

animal veterinary services to the Bottineau community and surrounding areas.

Jill's motivation stemmed from her desire for autonomy and the ability to make meaningful decisions for her clients and patients. She wanted to create a practice where she could have

control over the culture and goals. Being a business owner provided that along with allowing Jill to shape her own destiny. She relished the autonomy and close relationships she built with clients and the community.

Jill first learned about the North Dakota Small Business Development Centers (ND SBDC) through the Bottineau Economic Development Corporation. She initially used the ND SBDC services to formulate a business plan to secure startup financing. During advising sessions with Mary Beth Votava, Jill expected assistance in identifying weaknesses and inefficiencies in her business. She sought advice on improving profitability and resilience.

Mary Beth helped Jill analyze her finances and pinpoint areas for expense reduction. Additionally, they worked together to identify staff inefficiencies, ultimately





leading to improved profitability. Thanks to SBDC's guidance, Turtle Mountain Veterinary Service has witnessed an improvement in its profit margin.

One of the most significant challenges Jill faced was surviving the construction process of a new hospital facility. While the process was riddled with setbacks, her determination and resilience saw her through, resulting in a beautiful, upgraded facility.

Turtle Mountain Veterinary Service has come a long way from its humble beginnings with a staff of just three. Today, it has several employees, allowing it to serve a larger client base and expand its practice range. Within a decade, the business outgrew its initial space and moved into the current spacious and modern facility.

The business has worked with the ND SBDC for many years, coming back during phases of growth for additional guidance and

assistance. Mary Beth Votava, the Minot Center Director, has been there to help every step of the way. From initial appointments back in when things were starting in 2005, through the building of a new facility, and continuing today.

"Mary Beth has provided me with valuable and realistic guidance through the years and continues



to do so. She is even a bit of a therapist and has helped me navigate some rough times and been instrumental in maintaining my morale during those periods. I'm not sure I would still be here today without her guidance."

Jill attributes her success to sheer grit and determination. It is the relentless drive to keep going, even when faced with adversity, which has propelled her forward. The Bottineau Economic Development Corporation and the First National Bank of Bottineau have been instrumental in supporting Jill's business

growth. The community has also provided steadfast support, with loyal clients who have remained with her for years.

"Find the right people to help you. Don't try to do this alone," says Jill. "Acquire as much information as you can about finance, human resources, and marketing. Be adaptable and just keep going!" Jill wholeheartedly recommends ND SBDC services to other small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. "The ND SBDC offers great resources, providing valuable knowledge and expertise to help your business grow."

Jill regularly reminds herself that she's still here nearly



20 years later, a testament to her unwavering determination. Turtle Mountain Veterinary Service continues to thrive, serving its community and fulfilling Jill's dream of independent entrepreneurship.



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