

SUCCESS



AMERICA'S
SBDC
UTAH

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In 2021, the Utah SBDC network saw unprecedented numbers of small business owners requesting our assistance. Demand for our services jumped nearly 150% last year. We're anticipating that meaningful recovery for many small businesses won't begin until COVID-19 and its variants are under control. While many business owners continue to struggle, we've also seen how resilient and innovative they can be as they adapt their businesses to an ever-changing economy. Some have tapped into opportunities to launch new enterprises and expand their market share.

The Utah SBDC exhausted the Cares Act funding we received in 2021 assisting struggling small businesses with SBA relief funding. Through our efforts, many stayed

brought back \$3.27 in state tax revenues. Finally, our clients told us we helped create 1,406 jobs.

As always, we recognize and thank our host institutions throughout the state including Utah State University, Davis Technical College, Weber State University, Salt Lake Community College, Utah Valley University, Snow College, Southern Utah University, Tooele Technical College, and Dixie Technical College. We also thank the numerous other public organizations who contribute to our success.

Once again, Utah finds itself in an enviable position relative to other states who have suffered from the pandemic. Because of sound fiscal policies, Utah had another excellent economic year. This will go a long way to help small businesses recover and keep Utah's economy growing.

Because of sound fiscal policies, Utah had another excellent economic year. This will go a long way to help small businesses recover and keep Utah's economy growing.

in business and kept employees working. Thankfully, the State of Utah entered the pandemic crisis with one of the country's strongest and most diverse economies. So, while tourism and hospitality sectors were hurt, others saw more modest slowdowns and some even saw gains. Supply chain transportation, labor shortages, shipping delays, out-of-stock items and higher prices will continue to challenge small businesses in coming years. The Utah SBDC stands ready to offer our assistance in each of these areas with one-on-one consulting and online resources.

Through the dedicated efforts of Utah SBDC Regional Directors, we helped 354 new businesses begin operations as part of our total clients served, which was 3,226. We provided \$112,986,506 in capital infusion (loans obtained by clients). We helped clients increase sales revenue by \$52,217,897, which included \$5,214,364 in export sales. For every \$1.00 we spent operating the Utah SBDC, we

The Utah SBDC will continue helping small businesses recover and grow. We'll continue providing a positive impact on Utah's economy through job creation, small business starts, small business loans, and state and federal tax revenues generated.



Michael C. Finnerty
Utah Small Business
Development Center
State Director



Utah SBDC Data, 2021

CAPITAL INFUSION



REVENUE



BUSINESS STARTS



354

CLIENTS SERVED



EXPORT SALES



\$5,214,364

STATE TAX REVENUE



JOBS CREATED



COUNSELING HOURS



BENEFIT TO COST RATIO



\$3.27

\$1.00



Ceruz Gear Is Right on Target

Cory and Carrie Newman are life-long patriots and supporters of the second amendment. Cory was working as a firearms designer for a large company on the east coast when they felt compelled to move and start their own business in Cache Valley.

The Newmans founded Ceruz Gear to improve gun cleaning mats, which protect work surfaces and firearm finishes while cleaning the firearm. At the time, gun cleaning mats were severely lacking, with everything done overseas, incorrect, and not aesthetically pleasing. Cory tapped his skills as a designer and created the signature product, the AR-15 Instructional ProMat. With color-coordinated instructions and one-to-one parts placement, it teaches any firearm owner how to fieldstrip and clean their AR-15.

BUSINESS ASSISTED BY THE SBDC AT:

Extension

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The Newmans knew their product was a hit when their 13- and 15-year-old daughters individually were able to disassemble and assemble the firearm only using the mat as their guide. From there, a product lineup of over 400 different firearm models, patriotic designs, and color variants were born.

The Logan SBDC was instrumental in helping Ceruz Gear with strategic direction, web development, employee issues, company structure, funding, and a variety of other issues. They also focused on offering product photography to further their online presence. Additionally, they served as mentors in the start-up process and connected them with great local resources.

The Ceruz Gear business model is so successful because of two very different sales channels: consumers and businesses. First, the direct-to-consumer channel serves customers through the Ceruz website where other gun enthusiasts and firearm owners can buy mats for themselves or as gifts. Cory explains, "The goal is to help build confidence. When a person is trained and knows the components of their firearm, safety increases and they know they can protect themselves and others."

The second sales channel provides custom mats to manufacturers, dealers, trainers, and other businesses in the industry. "We have been blessed to partner with some of the top manufactures" Carrie says.



TURNING ABANDONED INTO BEAUTIFUL

Zack Family Farms is an urban flower farm located in Ogden, Utah. Owner Ana Zack specializes in growing and selling unique, sustainable flowers and ornamental plants for any occasion. This urban farm utilized an abandoned 1.3-acre field in the middle of houses with limited access and plenty of places to hideout. Zack rents the land for relatively cheap and has cleaned it up, including the buried shopping carts. It is now a beautiful feature of a neglected neighborhood.

Ana approached the SBDC after her husband Ben, who works for Weber State University (WSU) as a photographer, referred her. Her vision of turning blighted areas into something productive was immediately apparent, and the SBDC helped source the right location for the farm. The SBDC also encouraged Ana to present her idea publicly, which she first did to 1 Million Cups. With the help of WSU SBDC as a business mentor, she then applied for funds from the Wildcat MicroFund. Over two years, Ana received approximately \$7,000 in grants ranging from cooling and heating, to greenhouse, to marketing the company with a refurbished 1973 Volkswagen Beetle to showcase her freshly grown flowers.



**BUSINESS ASSISTED BY
THE SBDC AT:**



**WEBER STATE
UNIVERSITY**

ZACK FAMILY FARMS

Ogden Urban Flower Farm





SEASONING SUCCESS WITH SPICES



Sylvia Kapsandoy, owner of Amboseli Foods, grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. She came to the United States to attend school in Idaho. She transferred to the University of Utah and moved to Salt Lake City. After graduation, she worked for a local manufacturer as a quality control manager.

In 2008, Sylvia knew her career would undergo changes when an investment company purchased the company she was working for. She knew that she needed a backup, and as a hobby, Sylvia started putting together her own spice blends, which she began selling on Etsy in early 2010. In October 2013, Amazon contacted her to put her products on its website. Once on Amazon, sales tripled the first year, and she knew she had something big. Over the next two years, she sold what she could but didn't focus on growing the business.

In 2015, Sylvia began to scale production and found a commercial kitchen to rent. By fall 2016, the kitchen wasn't available enough for her needs, and she started to look for her own space.

"We looked in Salt Lake City and Ogden and couldn't find anything that worked," she said. "In 2017, I finally found a listing for a commercial kitchen space in Layton. It was perfect for us."

Sylvia continued to experience changes at her day job. The company she worked for was purchased and required her to relocate to the Northeast. She moved to Connecticut, and her employee ran the business, but the arrangement didn't allow her to spend enough time managing Amboseli Foods, and her business began decreasing. Luckily, she was transferred back to Utah in February



of 2020, and in September of 2020, she quit her job and started working full-time for Amboseli Foods, and the business grew quickly.

"I enrolled in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program and contacted Andrew Willis at the Kaysville SBDC to help me with market research and my growth strategy," she said. "I felt welcomed and supported. I had found mentors and resources that I wasn't aware of. They were awesome!"

Sylvia was grateful to Goldman Sachs, where she began to focus on how to get her business to the next level and understand the financial details. She now has five employees and plans to add more as her company continues growing.

Andrew said Sylvia has prepared herself to be a very successful business owner through her positive attitude, vision, commitment to her customers, and determination to turn every obstacle into a strength.

"She has been actively involved with the resources we offer," he said. "Sylvia has also been a strong example and support to other small business owners, particularly as she participates in the train-

ings and networking opportunities we offer. She is always willing to give back by helping other entrepreneurs."

On giving back, Sylvia responded, "We contribute to Kiva, which supports small businesses all over the world; namely, women and farmers in Third World countries."

Sylvia offered a key to her success: "Persistence! Find joy in what you do, even the most mundane things."

What does she like best about being an entrepreneur? "Accountability to myself and having control over my success and failures and owning that," she said. "Some people do it for the freedom, but actually there isn't freedom. You work your butt off, and you are always accountable to your customer, your banker, your employees, your family, and yourself."

**BUSINESS ASSISTED BY
THE SBDC AT:**

**BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER
DAVISTECH**

Amboseli Foods is a specialty food company that markets under the USimplySeason brand. Good food is our passion, and we see our fresh, artisan blends as a world tour of flavor for everyone to enjoy! We have uniquely crafted spices and seasonings in our global lineup, all expressly designed to differentiate themselves beyond the standard pantry staples." Shop Sylvia's growing selection of spice blends at usimplyseason.com.

GROWING A BUSINESS WITH UINTAH BASIN FAMILIES

Pettit Pediatrics opened its doors in April of 2019. Their mission is to provide quality and compassionate health care, thereby improving the physical and emotional well-being of children and families. Dr. Ethan Pettit and his team make customer service a priority. As they worked to provide that quality care, the patient load increased, requiring the services of another provider. After hiring a nurse practitioner along with additional staff, they are once again looking for more providers. Future growth plans include building more exam rooms within the next few months.

Proper planning and management have guided their success. "Our community resources made all the difference," Dr. Pettit said. "Mark Holmes at the Uintah Basin Small Business Development Center helped advise us with information specific to small business owners in our field. The most important help rendered was in creating our business plan. Asking the appropriate questions meant we were prepared as we planned. That business plan was vital to our SBA loan approval. Without Mark's help, we may have never received the SBA loans that allowed us to purchase a building for our startup practice."

"Dr. Pettit is an excellent example of an entrepreneur who sees a need and fills it in a way that not only benefits himself but the community in which he lives."

– Mark Holmes, regional SBDC director

Dr. Pettit has built on the help he received to assist in motivating others. "Taking the steps to open our own business was a leap for us," he said. "We realized throughout the difficult challenges of COVID that we needed to make it happen when we did. We have not regretted it a moment and find ourselves encouraging other hesitant entrepreneurs to open their own small businesses. We went from never wanting to own our own business to personally managing and encouraging others."

When asked about the secret to their business success, he said, "I want to give people more than what they are expecting."

BUSINESS ASSISTED BY THE SBDC AT:

Extension

UtahStateUniversity®



CHEESEMAKING WITH ALTITUDE IN PARK CITY

Park City Creamery, LLC was founded by Corinne Zinn in September 2018, and she opened its facility in June 2019. Corinne produces the only Utah handmade, ripened, soft artisan cheeses. Before starting Park City Creamery, Corinne managed Deer Valley Resort's cheesemaking operation.

Corinne grew up in Belgium and hosted wine and cheese pairings for her friends and industry guests for decades. Corinne spent much of her free time in France visiting dairy farmers and cheesemakers, acquiring knowledge and a passion for cheesemaking. In 2002, she left her career in financial management to pursue a new career of cheesemaking in the United States.

"Never give up on your dream; focus, and work your way toward making it come true."

– Corrine Zinn

In the process of starting Park City Creamery, Corinne contacted the Salt Lake Region SBDC. She met with Jim Herrin, its director, to receive advice and counsel on running her business. In 2019, she opened her facility and, by that summer, was receiving a growing number of orders. As with many fast-growing businesses, cash flow became an issue in keeping up with the orders and paying the bills. She also entered an agreement with a major local food distributor that would quickly result in more growth. Corinne reached out again to Jim concerning her cash flow issues. Jim counseled Corinne and helped her develop a business plan and financial projections with which she applied and received a loan from the Utah Microloan Fund.

Regarding SBDC's assistance, Corinne says, "SBDC's business support goes way beyond giving us a loan to facilitate our cash flow. Their ad-



vice brought us peace of mind and allowed us to focus on growing our business. [The] SBDC gives us such incredibly valuable service in advising us, always answering our questions, and redirecting us in the right direction when needed. It's been a blessing to have access to such great professional advice. We are extremely grateful."

Since opening, the Park City Creamery has continued to grow—even weathering the COVID-19 pandemic. She has already earned many awards. In April 2021, Corinne won the Women's Entrepreneurial Conference Grant Competition and was awarded the Wendy J. English People's Choice Award. She also received the Taste Utah Award from the Utah Restaurant Association in June 2021.

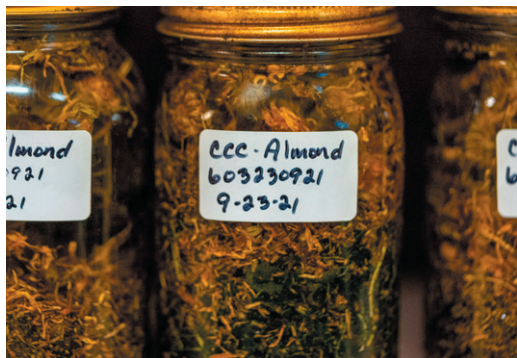
Through her decades of hard work and refining her craft, Corinne has created an artisan cheesemaking business that has rewarded thousands of Utah cheese lovers with homegrown cheeses of quality and taste at the level of Europe's finest cheeses.



**BUSINESS ASSISTED BY
THE SBDC AT:**

**Salt Lake
Community
College**





FINDING AND OFFERING HEALTH IN TOOELE COUNTY

Over 20 years ago, Melanie Skelton of Tooele faced the battle of her life with cancer.

In her struggle to change to a healthier lifestyle, she became aware of herbs and alternative therapies, which proved invaluable to her. After winning her fight with cancer and gaining new appreciation for healthy living, she began seeking ways to help others better support their health and improve their lives. SkinTastic Creations was born in her home. It was there that Melanie became a master herbalist and developed Auminay Naturals, her own product line of herbal-infused skin-care products for a healthier lifestyle.

If it were not for the SBDC, I wouldn't have a business."

- Melanie Skelton

In 2017, working with the Tooele Valley SBDC, Melanie and her husband Dale opened Melanie's Health and Nutrition as a two-person operation. It was the first natural remedies and herbal store in Tooele County. Today, Melanie, Dale, and their staff of eight love serving the Tooele Valley community, providing health and wellness classes and manufacturing the Auminay product line. They offer these and other products online and through their brick-and-mortar store, helping to empower people to be healthier.

Reflecting on the long journey that has brought them to this point, Melanie attributes her success to working with the SBDC.

"If it were not for the SBDC, I wouldn't have a business," Melanie said. "It was the SBDC that taught me the steps I needed to take at each stage of my business and who supported me in taking them. They brought me to the triggering point to seek funding and open my store. The SBDC provided training and introduced me to the Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Businesses Program, where I learned to scale and grow my business even more. It's Jess at the SBDC who continues to show me how to implement the principles and practices I'm learning today."

BUSINESS
ASSISTED
BY THE
SBDC AT:





FINALLY BUILDING SOMETHING OF HIS OWN

If there is a story that defines the never-give-up mentality, it's the story of Greg Anderson. It began 40 years ago when he started an engineering job at 17 years of age and dreamed of owning his own business. That pursuit became a reality in July of 2020, when Greg, Tim Mitchell, and Bob Wenzel became the new owners of EarthTec Engineering.

Located in Lindon, Utah, EarthTec Engineering employs 36 full-time employees and provides services throughout Utah. They specialize in performing environmental, geotechnical investigations and engineering studies, welding inspections, construction material testing, and many more services.

Greg began visiting the SBDC in 2013 as he sought guidance on whether to start his own business or purchase an existing one. Over the years, Greg worked with his SBDC advisor to evaluate several opportunities, but it wasn't until 2020 that the right opportunity and the right partners arrived.

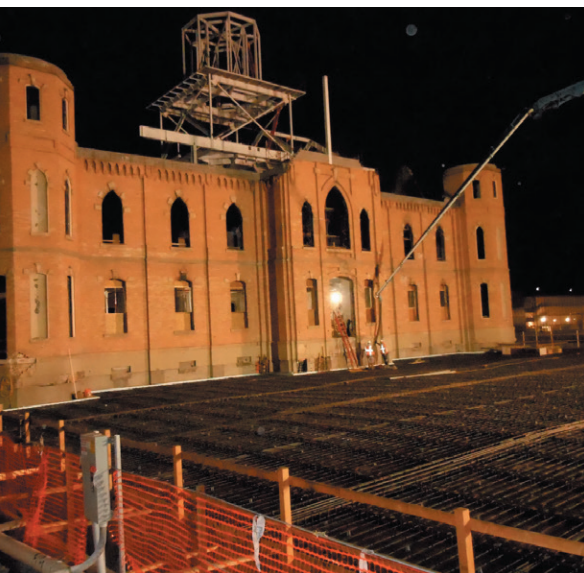




At the time, Greg and Tim were both working as employees at EarthTec when they learned the owners were seeking to sell. Greg again contacted the SBDC, and over the course of several months, Shaun Wilson helped with the business valuation, SBA financing preparation, and negotiating the purchase of the business. Greg explained how the SBDC's coaching and support through the acquisition was a tremendous help in making this lifelong dream become a reality.

"Clearly, do your homework and know what you're getting into, but most of all, ask yourself this question: What would you do if you weren't afraid?"

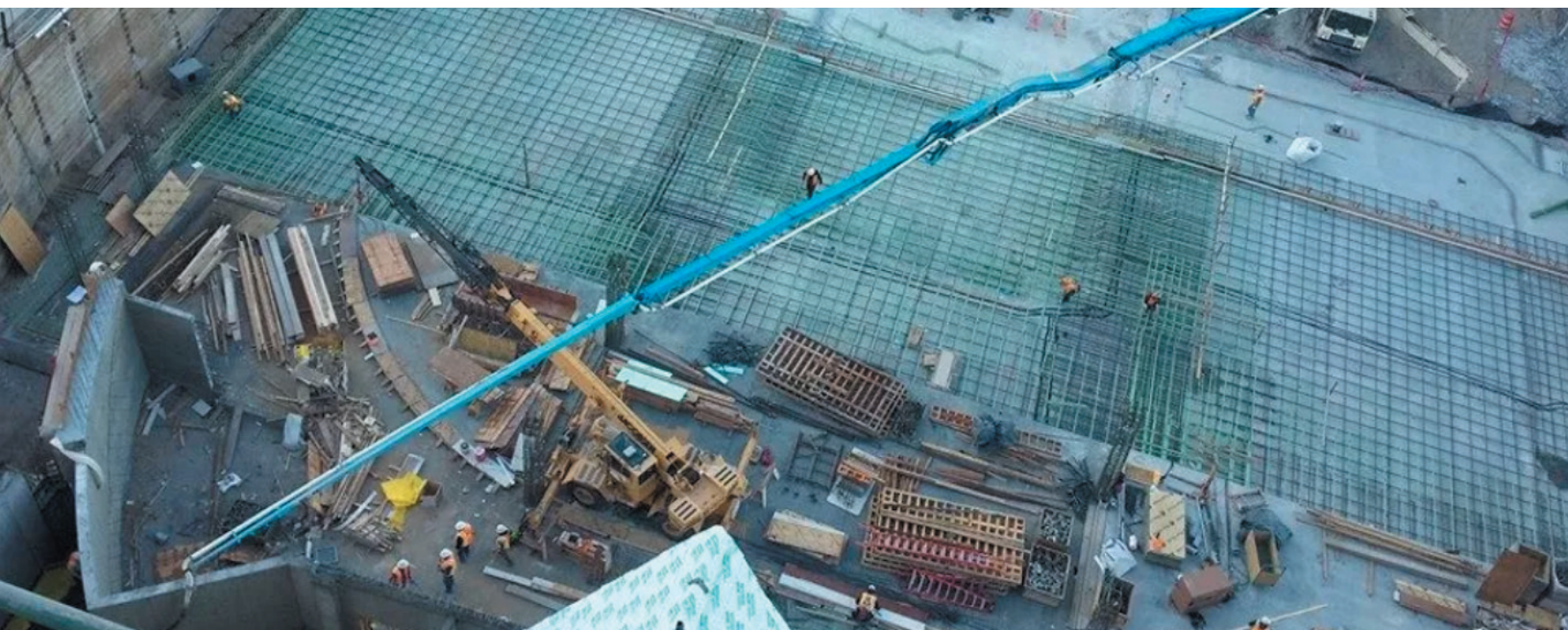
– Greg Anderson



While reflecting on why he never gave up on his dream of owning his own business, Greg acknowledged that he and Tim are similar, saying, "We are driven self-starters who've always wanted to pursue our own path, control our destiny, and build something of our own."

With new titles and increasing revenues, the new EarthTec team is now focusing on future growth in new markets and seeking to hire 10 new employees in 2022.

When asked what tips they'd give to prospective business owners, Greg said, "Clearly, do your homework and know what you're getting into, but most of all, ask yourself this question: What would you do if you weren't afraid?"



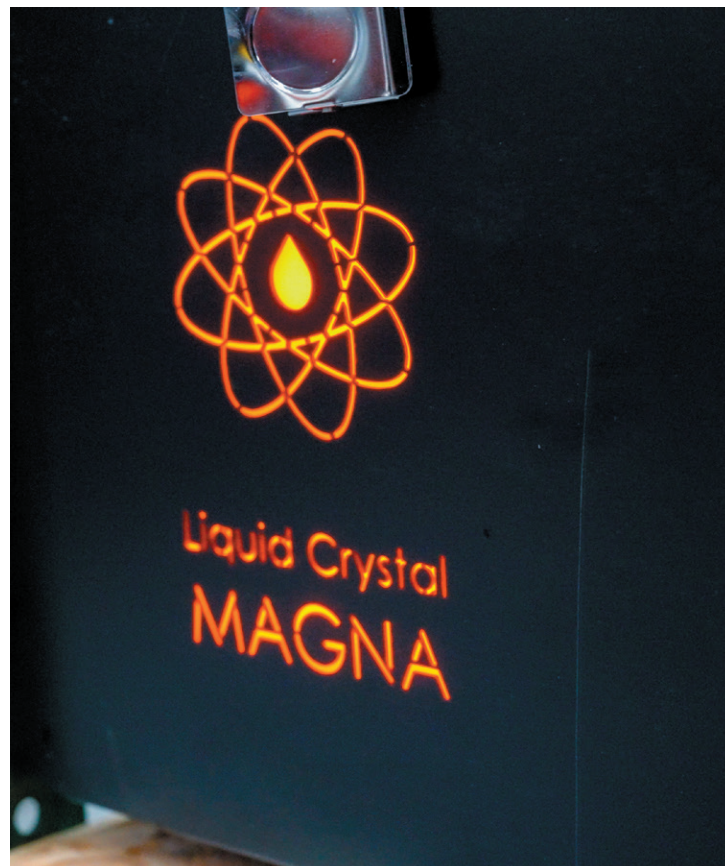


Dustless Technologies has a long history of innovation. From its initial Ash Vacuum, developed by founder Mike Loveless in the 1980s, to dust shrouds sold across the U.S. and Canada, to having one of the top-selling slurry vacuums in the U.S., this small rural company has constantly been pushing the limits of what is possible. Today, that culture of innovation is still thriving.

In 2019, Spencer Loveless, who took over as CEO, came to a realization. At that time, the company was negotiating a new vacuum launch, but the same issues continued to cause the same problems. Everything was dependent upon manufacturing from overseas suppliers. There were long lead times, high tariffs, multiple risk factors, and off-shoring of jobs. Spencer decided it was time to move manufacturing back to the U.S., and the only way to succeed was to find ways to innovate.

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Eastern





"I've always relied on the SBDC to connect us with partners and resources to grow our company."

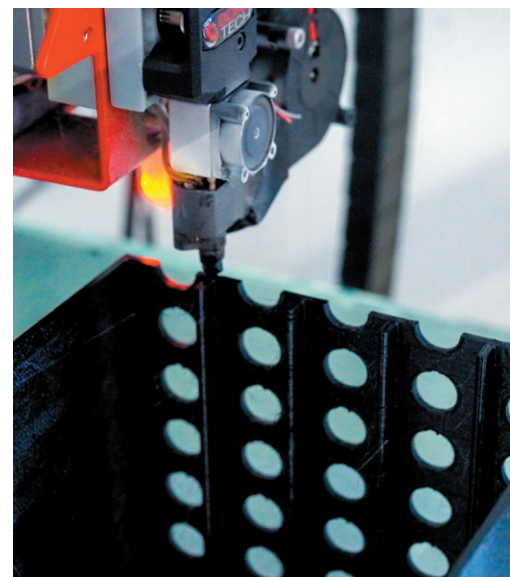
—Spencer Loveless

It took an additional year of planning, partnering, and preparing, but finally, in 2020, Spencer launched Merit 3D, a company that uses advanced manufacturing to produce high-quality products in the United States.

"I've always relied on the SBDC to connect us with partners and resources to grow our company," Spencer said as he reflected on the journey to launching Merit 3D. "We needed several things to come together to make this happen, and through a collective effort and lots of support, we were able to really expand our business."

Some of the resources include partnering with USU Eastern, the World Trade Center of Utah, and the Utah SBDC; engaging in an Economic Gardening research project; and creating a high school internship program.

As Dustless Technologies and Merit 3D both continue to grow and expand with new sales and new employees, Spencer considers his secret to success, saying, "We've always been innovative and will continue to do so. Only this time, we've broadened our reach by working with multiple successful partner organizations."





FROM FLEDGLING FOODIE TO RURAL RESTAURANTEUR

Brent and Teresa Boylan took a risk. They decided they wanted to open a new restaurant in their hometown with no experience running a business on this scale. Plans were made, counseling was sought, property was leased, and recipes became realities. Grandma Berta's Kitchen was born!

Brent and Teresa came to the SBDC in Ephraim from the very beginning of Grandma Berta's Kitchen. "Without the SBDC, we wouldn't have done this," Teresa said.

They received help from Tim Chamberlain and the Ephraim staff on the many aspects of how to start a business, the legalities of getting started, restaurant basics such as pricing, loan application review, and most importantly, encouragement. Moreover, the Boylans learned the importance of social media and marketing through SBDC.

"Most of all, they were and are a continuous encouraging voice as we move through the obstacles and challenges in getting started and being new," Teresa said.

Teresa has been a baker for many years, perfecting her sweet treats for her children's friends and her neighbors. As a child, she learned that she could eat what she wanted to eat if she made the food. This gave her the ability to experiment with food and make it her way.

Teresa began working at the Manti Temple cafeteria in 2013, where she started as a dishwasher and then moved up to a cook. She was able to improve the quality of the food by making it from scratch. When she was told the temple would be closing for renovations, she knew it was time to start her own restaurant.

Now she offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner at Grandma Berta's Kitchen, which is bringing life to their small community. Locals are excited to see the restaurant open again. The Boylans strive to create an inviting, home-like space for customers and team members alike. It is best summed up in their slogan: "Welcome home, dinner is ready!"



BUSINESS ASSISTED BY THE SBDC AT:





LOSING A JOB AND GAINING A RAINBOW

After many jobs were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, Allison Moist found herself working for a tour guide company. She disagreed with the practices they used at this business, and she knew she could do better. She learned a lot from this experience, and with her partner, Mason McCord, they opened Sleeping Rainbow Adventures, a jeep touring business in Torrey, Utah, in April 2021.

"I knew there was a better way to run a guiding company and wanted to start a small business that cares for people and the land," she said.

Her goals were to share epic, memorable experiences in the outdoors while caring for the land. She personally

knows how nature provides a healing place and believes travel fosters a greater understanding and land stewardship. She has a passion for creating opportunities for people to do the things they enjoy and making them happy.

During their first year, Moist and McCord faced many obstacles. Allison knew it wouldn't be easy and understands they will continue to have more challenges, but she is grateful to have an amazing business partner who complements her strengths.

"We work through things really well together, and communication is so important," she emphasized.

The other major struggle they had to overcome was money. Through many creative methods, they found their way.



She would advise others never to give up and to learn from mistakes. She believes asking yourself, "How do we stand out from our competition?" is one of the best questions a business owner can ask.

Allison is grateful for her interaction with the Richfield SBDC. She first heard about it from her dad, who is an





“Don’t sweat the small things, like your first 3-star review, and keep doing the best you can.”
– Allison Moist

entrepreneur himself. She reached out to receive all the help she could get in starting and running her business. The SBDC helped her connect to potential loans, reviewed her business plan, offered training opportunities in bookkeeping, social media, advertising, and extended reimbursements for wilderness medical training through the Custom Fit program available in their center.

One of Allison’s favorite parts of the SBDC was the creation of the SBDC Women in Business group in Wayne County that Christine Hanks started in early 2021. These monthly meetings provided training and networking to

meet with other hardworking women in the area. They have banded together and helped each other.

When asked what words of wisdom she would give to others, she quoted from Napoleon Hill: “Within every problem is an opportunity. Even in the knocks of life, we can find great gifts.”

Allison realizes that life is incredibly hard, and sometimes terrible things happen, but there is so much beauty. The only choice you have is to make the most of the circumstances you are in because you do have a lot of control over how you handle situations. By losing her job, she was able to rewrite her story and is grateful for the loss; otherwise, she would have never started Sleeping Rainbow Adventures.

She concluded, “Don’t sweat the small things, like your first 3-star review, and keep doing the best you can.”

BUSINESS ASSISTED BY THE SBDC AT:



Serving Up Smiles in Cedar City



Lizzie & Lola's Espresso & More was a dream over five years in the making for Elizabeth (Lizzie) Johnson, her husband Rader, and their beloved dog, Lola. Lizzie has been a barista for nearly 10 years, and she passionately believes that businesses should bring joy to and connect with their customers. She does that by truly caring about her customers, and it shows. Lizzie & Lola's Espresso & More is more than a high-quality beverage shop. With a mission of bringing kindness and love to the community and beyond through a passion for coffee and service, the beverage shop brings positivity into people's lives through genuine care and connection.

"We believe the secret to our success lies in our passion to serve and connect with every single customer we come in contact with," Lizzie said. "We strive to have our guests leave with a delicious beverage and also an uplifting

and positive feeling from a wonderful and meaningful experience."

Lizzie was referred to the Cedar City SBDC by her bank, State Bank of Southern Utah, for assistance preparing a loan package to purchase and renovate her vintage 1961 trailer and for additional startup costs. Joni Anderson worked with Lizzie to help her meet health department requirements, develop financial projections and assumptions, and work through business and marketing plans.

"The help and direction I received while working with Joni during the beginning stages of my small business means the world to me," said Lizzie. "She was so encouraging, and her guidance flawlessly helped me successfully apply for the SBA loan that made my dream possible. More than anything, Joni's support gave me the much-needed confidence to make my dream a reality."

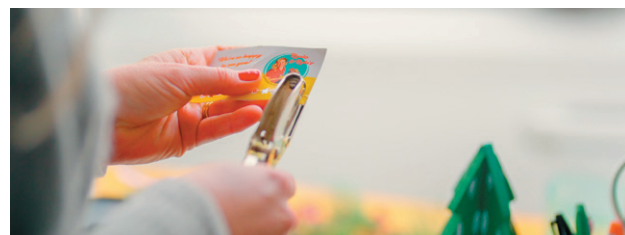
The business officially opened its doors in June 2021, and while they have



only been open several months, the support from the community has been wonderful. Lizzie plans to continue using the resources provided by the Cedar City SBDC as business grows.

**BUSINESS ASSISTED BY
THE SBDC AT:**

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UTAH
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RIDING THE WAVE OF SUCCESS

Louis Williams is the owner of Ancient Wayves River & Hiking Adventure, LLC, a business grounded in conservation and preservation-focused river and hiking tours. His work stands out as one of the few Native American-run operations in the recreation industry.

Louis and his team of local native guides add heartfelt stories and share the significance of the land from a Navajo (Diné) and Indigenous perspective. They engage their guests with the land, water, animals, and plants.

Ancient Wayves, based near the Four Corners region, provides guided hiking tours throughout the Northern Navajo Nation and the Bears Ears region. These tours are available to the local, domestic, and international community.

Currently, Louis is working with the Bureau of Land Management to expand river tours along the San Juan River from Shiprock, New Mexico, to Clay Hill, Utah. In 2020, Ancient Wayves obtained the first commercial river permit to be granted by Navajo Nation.



BUSINESS ASSISTED BY THE SBDC AT:

UtahStateUniversity®
Blanding





Louis believes in his mission to preserve the culture and share the environmental and geological history of the region.

Since the launch of Ancient Wayves in February 2020, the demand for his unique Native American tours has been high despite opening as the COVID-19 pandemic closed down national and tribal parks, halting international travel. Unable to qualify for COVID-relief funding, Ancient Wayves, LLC reached out to the USU Blanding SBDC as a resource.

The grit and hustle of Louis are apparent as he tirelessly works with Meghan McFall to obtain training. With sheer determination, he believes in his mission to preserve the cultures and share the environmental and geological history of the region.

When asked about the support provided, Louis said, "Ancient Wayves has received a tremendous amount of help from the SBDC staff. They have helped us in many ways: marketing, accounting, leadership, and getting funding. We extend limitless thanks to the SBDC office in Blanding for helping our company grow."



TUACAHN, THE “BROADWAY OF THE DESERT”

The stage is set, the cast and crew are ready, the audience stirs slightly to take their seats as the lights dim—highlighting the starlight sky above and rugged sides of scenic red rock circling the stage. Tuacahn holds a special place in the hearts and minds of those native to St. George, but also to those who come from around the country and world to visit. Known to many as the “Broadway of the Desert,” Tuacahn invites 300,000 guests per year to fill the outdoor amphitheater at the opening of Padre Canyon near Snow Canyon State Park in Ivins, Utah. Coming second only to Zion National Park, Tuacahn Center for the Arts stimulates Southern Utah’s tourist industry by \$95 to \$100 million per year providing hotels, restaurants, and other business jobs to the area.

“...it’s hard to imagine (Tuacahn’s) primitive beginning. Yet just as this natural amphitheater was shaped by centuries of scorching heat and desert rain, so too has the history and future ... been molded by winds of change and the shaping power of dreams.

Built on the shoulders of Orval Hafen (the original owner of Padre Canyon) as well as the unparalleled drive and ambition of Doug Stewart and Hyrum W. Smith, a seemingly impossible dream blossomed into the reality that exists today.”

In early 2021, on the eve of celebrating its 25 year anniversary, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, hitting event centers like Tuacahn especially hard. Faced with the difficult decision of closing the doors for good or entrenching the institution in millions of dollars in debt for many years, the Board Chaired by Jonathan Hafen, and Management including Kevin Smith, CEO turned to the local St George Small Business Development Center with support from the Small Business Administration to save this local landmark.





"Without the support, encouragement, and assistance from the St George SBDC, the PPP's and Shuttered Venue Grants (SVOG), we may have closed or been in debt for an additional 5 to 10 years," said Kevin Smith, CEO.

With the assistance of the St. George SBDC and funding from the SBA, the nationally recognized regional theater has become a group of pioneering professionals in the performing arts industry. Tuacahn was the first fully vaccinated cast and crew theatrical company. They hosted the inauguration of Utah Governor Spencer Cox in January 2021, possibly the first regional theatre event in the country. They were also the first major repertory theater to perform shows as restrictions from the pandemic eased nationwide. Like their pioneer ancestors before them, the members of the Tuacahn theatrical company made it through trials with perseverance, resilience, determination, and dedication from the community they love. The year 2021 became the best on record.

Now, Tuacahn owners and company members are hopeful that circumstances are becoming more normal, and people are turning away from fear. The cast and crew are following COVID protocols, and they are happy to continue entertaining families for generations to come.

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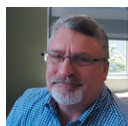


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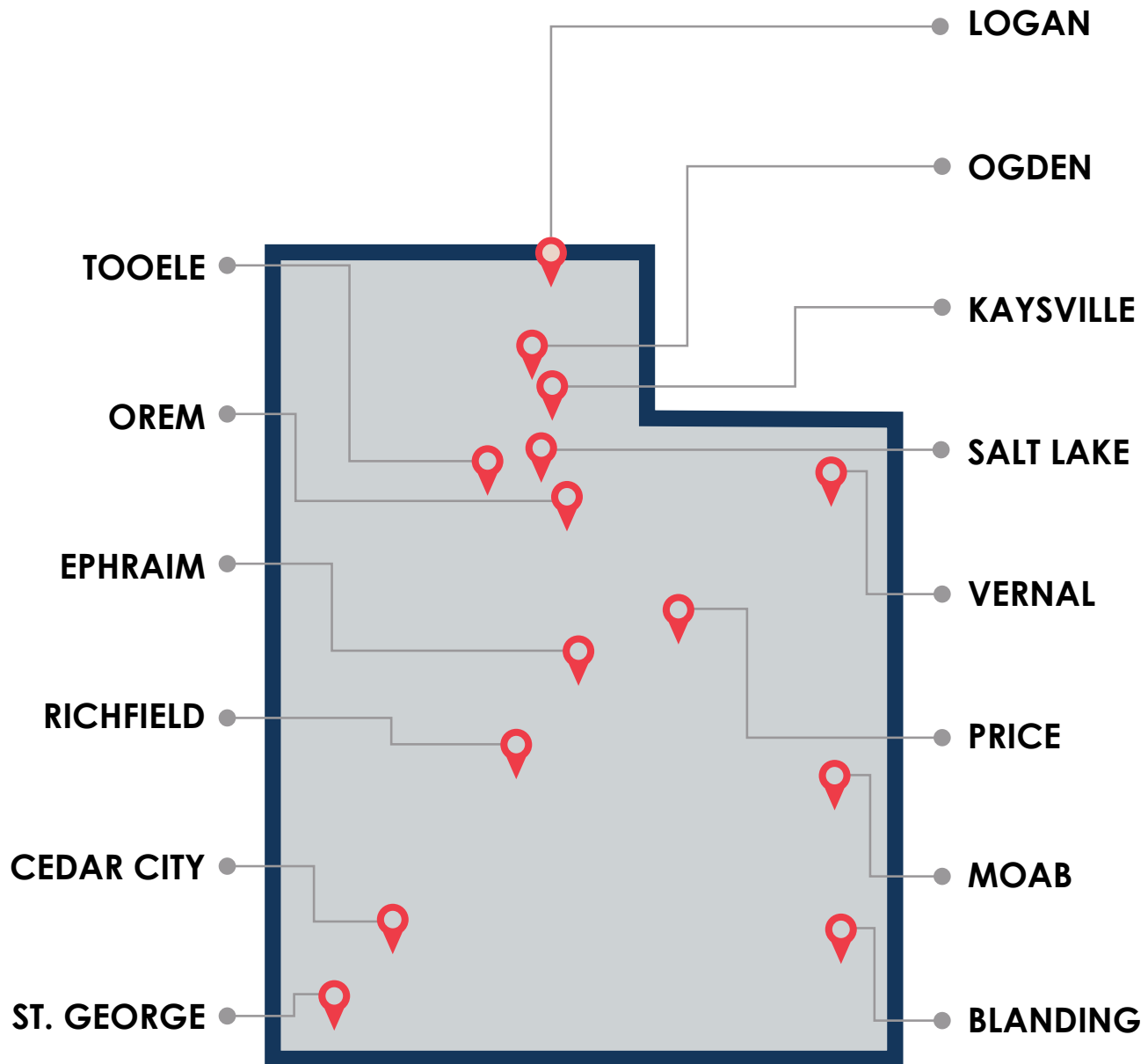
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