



Collaboration fosters business growth in Eagle Butte



JTR Trips a downtown Eagle Butte sporting goods store opened in January. From left to right are Wynona Traversie, Mark Shupick (back), the LaPlante's (Jared, Tyson, Verzella, Rebecca, Bernie) and Tanya Fiddler.

JTR Trips, a downtown Eagle Butte sporting goods store, opened its doors in January, 2007, thanks to family support and community dedication to the ongoing success of youth entrepreneurship in the local business economy.

When Kevin Keckler, the previous owner of Northern Sports, decided to sell, there was stiff competition by potential buyers. The possibility existed that Eagle Butte would lose the business, should a new owner decide to relocate. However, due largely to the successful collaboration of SBA, SBDC, American State Bank in Pierre and Four Bands Community Fund, Inc., serving the Cheyenne River Reservation, ownership of this essential business is retained in Eagle Butte.

Now that the business is theirs to own and to manage, Rebecca, Tyson and Jared LaPlante understand all too well that designing the business is the easy part. Starting the business has proved to be the real challenge. Throughout the process, the three siblings quickly learned that launching a business is a complicated process, with all the preparations, planning, negotiations, modifications, contingencies and expenses that it entails. As the three now know, the most difficult part of the business is the time it takes to actually run it. Fortunately for them, their parents, Bernie and Verzella LaPlante, were very supportive of their vision and assisted them in starting the business. Their assistance included not only valuable management expertise, but also the equity startup funds that they needed.

The equity injection, together with funding from Four Bands Community Fund, made securing a conventional loan a possibility.

“Since inception, Four Bands has been committed to supporting local businesses on Cheyenne River”, says Tanya Fiddler, executive director of Four Bands Community Fund, a Native C.D.F.I. (Community Development Financial Institution) “Over the past couple of years we saw it was important to increase the quality of services and access to loan capital for our customers. We have been able to do this strategically through collaboration with the Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Center, Four Bands Staff and other traditional lenders, resulting in the increase in private sector development on the reservation. It’s an honor to be able to open doors for our businesses and especially for our young people, like the LaPlante family, who are working so hard to see their dreams become a reality, reinforcing rural entrepreneurship development.”

“Where there is no vision, the people perish. Our vision is to encourage economic development on our reservation. – Bernie LaPlante

According to Mark Shupick, Four Bands Business Success Coach, “Jared, Tyson and Rebecca were first introduced to Four Bands when they signed up for the C.R.E.A.T.E. (Cheyenne River Entrepreneurial Assistance Training and Education) program, a business plan training class in January 2006. They graduated March of 2006 and have completed over 40 hours of training and technical assistance for starting their own business. Graduating CREATE qualified them to apply for a small business loan from Four Bands’ revolving loan fund to help finance their start-up of the Eagle Butte downtown sporting goods store, JTR Trips.

Believing that they can succeed as small business owners, they are hoping to inspire other reservation youth to create their own jobs as reservation entrepreneurs and, as Four Bands' graduates, they will continue to receive the technical assistance they will need to ensure that success."

"If it wasn't for Four Bands, we wouldn't have been considered for a loan and this would not have been possible. They helped us prepare a package for starting a business and helped us to learn how to operate our business. We really appreciate Four Bands and we hope we can provide a quality service for the reservation." – Jared LaPlante

Cora Mae Haskell, Four Bands Business and Finance Trainer, describes Rebecca, Tyson and Jared as "very enthusiastic students." Cora Mae says "They made sure they were always in class. I know these students will make great entrepreneurs."

Wynona Traversie, Four Bands Loan Officer, says "Working with the La Plante family to get this loan off the ground was a very good experience. The kids were sincere and driven to start their business and we at Four Bands did what was necessary to fulfill their dream."

Bernie LaPlante, father of Rebecca, Jared and Tyson, member of Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, long time resident of Eagle Butte and manager of the Lakota Thrifty Mart, summed the experience by saying "Where there is no vision, the people perish. Our vision is to encourage economic development on our reservation. Kevin and Marla Keckler brought this service to our community and we hope to combine our efforts to make it successful."



Tyson, Rebecca, and Jared LaPlante with Wynona Traversie. The LaPlante's opened JTR Trips, a sporting goods store in Eagle Butte.

JTR Trips, Eagle Butte

Owners: Jared, Tyson and Rebecca LaPlante

Location: 210 Main Street, Eagle Butte

PH: (605) 964-6482

Hours of Operation: Mon. – Sat., 10 am – 6 pm

Providing: embroidery services, jewelry, clothing, caps and shoes



Four Bands Community Fund

PO Box 932

Eagle Butte, SD 57625

PH: (605) 964-3687

Fax: (605) 964-3689

Email: info@fourbands.org

Web: FourBands.org

FOUR BANDS STAFF

Tanya Fiddler

Executive Director

Donita Fischer

Youth Program & Partnership Coordinator

Cora Mae Haskell

Business & Finance Trainer

Darla Lawrence-Shaving

Finance & Administrative Officer

Nicole Seaton Fiddler

Program Coordinator

Mark Shupick

Business Success Coach

Wynona Traversie

Loan Fund & Financial Literacy Specialist