

Building a business in small town Ontario, The SLBDC can help you get started

By: SLBDC STAFF

Since 2001, Don Rivers Auto Service and Repair has been putting the customer first and offering friendly and trustworthy service. In addition to the automotive services, they also have a busy full service gas station. Run by Don, his wife Tracey, and their son Adam, one thing is always certain when you bring your vehicle in for service; the advice you get will be honest, forthright and there will be no upselling. Don believes strongly in educating his customers about their vehicles and making sure they fully understand any needed repairs. He is a businessman with integrity and he knows that his industry can have a poor reputation for taking advantage of customer ignorance.

Located in Port Franks, Ontario, Don Rivers Auto Service is much more than a small town mechanic. Customers come from all over to have their vehicles serviced there. Building a business in small town Ontario hasn't always been easy. Independent businesses face many challenges in today's economy. Don notes that in the past, a downturn in the economy would signal a boost in sales as people rush to repair and fix their older vehicles rather than buying new. That hasn't been the case in recent years.

The journey has not been without adversity. The Rivers' have faced the addition of a competitor, but it hasn't stopped the loyal locals from stopping in to gas up and



say hello. Like most entrepreneurs, running a business is much more than a full time venture and it can make it difficult to enjoy vacations or weekend downtime. When asked about the advantages of running a small business, Don admits that he really enjoys "not having a boss looking over his shoulder". It means he can go above and beyond for his customers in a way that his competitors simply cannot.

Don learned what many new entrepreneurs learn the hard way. Banks often don't want to work with new businesses, making it difficult for them to get their start. This is where programs like those offered at the Sarnia-Lambton Business Development Corporation come in, connecting entrepreneurs with funding opportunities for both new startups and businesses wishing to expand. Don offers a piece of sound advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: "have money in the bank right from the start and be sure you have the time to devote to your success". With Adam trained and apprenticed under the knowledgeable eye of his father, Don Rivers Auto Service and Repair is poised to continue its honest approach for the next generation of car owners. Their desire to offer customer service over pressure-selling will ensure that customers always know who to turn to.

Don Rivers Auto Service is located at 2565 Lakeshore Road in Port Franks, Ontario and they can be reached at (519) 243-3750.

SLBDC
SARNIA-LAMBTON
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



A Community Futures Development Corporation

Providing counselling and consulting.
Loans are available specifically for the
needs of small business.

Canada

With the support of the Federal Economic
Development Agency for Southern Ontario