Sharing SBLA Success Stories

Prince Albert & District Community Futures Development Corporation

Backwoods Industries Inc. - Ernest Skaar

In the fall of 2002, while on a hunting trip in the Fort à la Corne area near Prince Albert, Ernest Skaar heard about the Backwoods Trailers from a fellow hunter in his hunting party. The all-purpose trailer can be used by ATVs, Argos, snowmobiles and now vehicles to haul anything imaginable up to 1,000 pounds.

This tweaked Ernest's interest and made him pursue more information regarding the trailers. The trailer features durable all-weather plastic, rounded corners, tapered front and back, and a low centre of gravity. It can be fitted with skis and has high-speed 1,000-pound spindles with *Ezee-Lube* hubs (2,000-pound axle). At this time, Ernest approached the owner of the concept and design of the Backwoods Trailers to discuss the purchase of the moulds, right to use and patent pending rights. Over the course of the next six months, the two parties came to an agreement regarding the Backwoods Trailers.

Ernest contacted the Prince Albert and District Community Futures Development Corporation for assistance with his business venture in July 2003 and found out about the Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) program. He successfully applied for a loan, and, in August 2003, Ernest began operation of his new business named Backwoods Trailers. The business has since been incorporated under the name Backwoods Industries Inc. The SBLA loan was used to purchase the moulds, right to use and patent pending rights of the Backwoods Buddy ATV Trailer from the existing owner.

All plastic for the trailer body is manufactured at Alcon Plastics in Saskatoon. All metal is purchased locally, and trailer assembly takes place at the Skaar's rural residence. The finished metal product is taken to Provincial Galvanizing of Saskatoon for final coating. The finished product comes with a one-year warranty against manufacturing defects.

The company generates business through its website -- www.backwoodstrailers.ca. -- but most sales are generated through tradeshows in Western Canada and the United States. Advertising placed in sporting magazines has also drawn positive feedback and sales. Customers include outfitters, hunters and government agencies from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia and the United States. This may open the door to a larger market segment in the future for Backwoods Industries Inc.

Ernest Skaar continues to focus on sales and the continued growth of the business. He currently distributes the trailers from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Napan, New Brunswick. Negotiations with other possible outlets is ongoing, and Ernest continues to work with existing outfitters to generate sales and interest for the product.