



News announcement  
Dakota Butcher  
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Contact: Jeff Eckhoff, state director  
Small Business Development Center  
(605) 367-5757 or [jeff.eckhoff@usd.edu](mailto:jeff.eckhoff@usd.edu)

## Dakota Butcher's expansion from Clark to Watertown goes even better than expected

WATERTOWN, S. D. – Randy Gruenwald has been quite pleased since he and his wife, Karen, expanded their meat business from Clark to Watertown.

The Gruenwalds fully opened their second Dakota Butcher, a full-service meat locker and specialty foods shop, in early 2015. Randy Gruenwald expected business in Clark to drop, at least initially, because nearly a third of original store's customers came from Watertown. Instead, business has increased steadily in both locations.

"What surprises me more than anything is that we haven't lost business in Clark, despite opening in Watertown," he said. Final numbers for 2015 are expected to show that combined sales for the year at the two stores were 20 to 25 percent higher than initially projected.

To get started in the meat business, the Gruenwalds bought a closed store, Clark Quality Meats, in 2009. They expanded the business by adding specialty foods such as cheese, a smokehouse for catering and liquor. They began with five employees, including themselves. Today their two stores employ more than 40 full- and part-time workers. Annual sales exceed \$3.5 million.

In addition to co-owning and guiding Dakota Butcher, Randy Gruenwald is a business banker at Dacotah Bank in Clark. He has worked for the bank since 1999. The Northern State University graduate brought prior experience in the meat business to the bank and his Dakota Butcher venture. He worked for Nash Finch grocery stores for 15 years prior to returning to Clark, his hometown. At Nash Finch, he advanced from store to store and ultimately managed the largest meat department in the company.

His wife has well-honed people skills, Gruenwald said. "Karen and I have made a great team overseeing the success of Dakota Butcher," he said. Karen Gruenwald resigned from her nursing job to work full time for Dakota Butcher. The Gruenwalds' son, Aaron, and daughter-in-law, Michelle, also work for the company. Other family members help at times, too.

To expand Dakota Butcher, the Gruenwalds bought a building in the larger community of Watertown, which is about 30 miles from Clark. They acquired the building in mid-2014 and remodeled it extensively

to include a full-service meat shop, deli, small grocery items, catering services, smokehouse and beverages.

Conda Williams counts on Dakota Butcher to provide her restaurant with high-quality, freshly ground meat. She owns The Prop, a longstanding restaurant that specializes in hamburgers. "I think they have developed quite a reputation in Watertown. A lot of customers ask me where I get my product, and I tell them the butcher shop," Williams said.

Belinda Engelhart, regional director of the South Dakota Small Business Development Center in Watertown, agrees that Dakota Butcher has developed a good reputation in the area. "I believe they are successful because they started with a sound plan and provide quality products with friendly, personal service," she said.

Engelhart has known Gruenwald for several years. She describes him as a thoughtful businessman who approached the expansion with cautious optimism. She served as a sounding board, and created numerous versions of projected financial scenarios. "I did a lot of financial projections for him in the business-planning stage," she said.

Engelhart assists Gruenwald with other projects, too. He seeks her advice to help bank customers. She raises questions about projects that he might not have considered. "With any new business or expanding business, Belinda is the first person I call to put budgets together to see if it's a viable idea," Gruenwald said. "She is excellent."

Engelhart's office is part of the South Dakota Small Business Development Center's statewide network of business-assistance offices. The office serves the counties of Brookings, Clark, Codington, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake, Miner and Moody. SBDC consultants can help new as well as expanding businesses with free services in areas such as financial planning. Engelhart can be reached at (605) 882-5115 or [belinda.engelhart@usd.edu](mailto:belinda.engelhart@usd.edu).

In addition to Watertown, the SBDC has regional offices in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Yankton, and satellite offices in Brookings and Mitchell. Other programs in the SBDC network include South Dakota Manufacturing & Technology Solutions, South Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, South Dakota International Trade Center, Small Business Innovation Research programs and the Enterprise Institute. The SBDC network is an outreach program of the Beacom School of Business at the University of South Dakota.

### **About the SBDC**

The Small Business Development Center network is funded through the support of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, the US Department of Defense, the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Small Business Administration. Additional support comes from the Citi Foundation and Xcel Energy.

**Photograph information:** The attached photos show the interior and exterior of the Dakota Butcher store in Watertown, S.D. The photos are courtesy of Dakota Butcher.