



South Dakota
**SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
CENTER**



New coffee shop in Lead
enjoying good business.
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Lotus Up Espresso & Deli is 'great addition' to the business community in historic town

LEAD, S.D. – Jamie Gilcrease-Heupel admits that she's a dreamer. She also wants to be an inspiration for Lead, a former mining town of about 3,000 residents.

Judging by the growing business at her relocated and expanded coffee shop and restaurant, she's succeeding.

In late June, Gilcrease-Heupel opened Lotus Up Espresso & Deli across the street from the former Homestake Open Cut Mine, one of the most famous landmarks in the Black Hills. Gold is no longer dug out of the old surface mine. Nor is gold mined any more in a nearby underground mine that closed in 2002. The underground mine has been converted into the Sanford Underground Research Facility, a prospective treasure for the town.

"I wanted to give back to the people of this town so that they could dream again. Just because the mine left, doesn't mean we can't dream again," Gilcrease-Heupel said.

As a member of the Lead Chamber of Commerce Board and other civic organizations, Gilcrease-Heupel is helping Lead rebrand itself as a scenic, outdoors recreation center.

"She has worked diligently for the past six years to make her dream a reality," said Dona Leavens, regional director of the South Dakota Small Business Development Center in Rapid City. "She's a phenomenal businesswoman, and she's actively involved in the community."

Gilcrease-Heupel moved from Washington state to Lead in 2009 to be close to her husband's family. She had prior experience working in a coffee shop, went to work at an existing coffee shop in Lead and ended up buying the business.

She had been in business for herself for about two years when she first met Leavens in 2012. She was leasing the coffee shop in the downtown area where she had previously worked, but she wanted to move to the business to a site with more potential for growth and expansion.

Leavens worked with Gilcrease-Heupel on financial projections to help her acquire needed financing to grow and expand the business. Leavens also helped connect Gilcrease-Heupel with other business-development experts in the area.

Gilcrease-Heupel decided in 2014 to build. She worked with the city and a local development group to acquire a prominent but undeveloped lot along East Main Street. Her husband, Dustin Heupel, is a general contractor, so he has been a big help with construction and other aspects of the project, Gilcrease-Heupel said.

Construction began in 2015 on a new building with 5,000 square foot of space spread over three floors. Lotus Espresso, which opened a few months ago, occupies a floor and a half of the new building. Vilas Pharmacy leases the first floor, and a grant writer leases an office on the third floor.

Lotus Up Espresso employs from seven to 11 people, depending on the time of year. The summer tourist season and winter recreation season are the busiest times. The Terry Peak ski area is nearby.

The name Lotus Espresso & Deli was inspired by the lotus flower, which can grow strong and beautiful from murky depths, Gilcrease-Heupel said. The flower could symbolize her aspirations for Lead as well as well as her own personal hopes and dreams.

“We’re showing some growth,” she said about Lead. “It’s really exciting to see new businesses come in.”

Gilcrease-Heupel is especially pleased with how her business has been going. Sales increased 47 percent the first two months in the new location. “It’s been absolutely amazing,” she said.

She appreciates the help she got from Leavens to get started. “I told her my dreams, and she helped me put my dreams on paper and in financials,” Gilcrease-Heupel said. “I’m a dreamer. I’m not great at explaining numbers to the bank. She helped me bridge that gap.”

The result of their work is satisfying for both women. “It’s a great addition, a beautiful building,” Leavens said.

About the SBDC

For more information about the South Dakota SBDC and its affiliated offices see www.sdbusinesshelp.com.

The SBDC has regional offices in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Watertown 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.

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