

.. AND YOU!

Silver Cue Enterprises Ltd. is a family business, operated by Nancy and Ralph Martin at 6691 Hart Highway. Two sons and a daughter, Jody, Shannon and Blaine work with them.

When Ralph Martin and a partner founded Silver Cue Enterprises Ltd. 16 years ago, The Federal Business Development Bank was instrumental in the startup, financing the equipment for the pool hall located in the Hart Shopping Centre.

Twelve years ago, the FBDB helped the Martins purchase their own building and a few years later financed an expansion - the Hart Coin Laundromat, in the same building.

Six years ago, Nancy Martin became involved in the business, replacing the original partner. Retail and wholesale divisions were added to the company. At that time, the Martins used another FBDB service, CASE Counselling for small enterprise. She recalls that both she and her husband lacked experience in retail sales. "The counsellor helped identify our problems and worked with us to put together a plan. He was very supportive," she says.

In addition to counselling, the Martins have attended a number of valuable FBDB seminars. Because the FBDB is one of the largest seminar organizers in North America, the program includes nearly every subject small and mid-size business may encounter.

"In a family business, time is the biggest problem. Time Management Seminars help ..."

Nancy Martin could be speaking for every small family business when she says, "In a family business, time is the biggest problem. Time management seminars help you use time to your advantage."

Today, Silver Cue Enterprises Ltd. is a successful small business offering wholesale and retail sales of pool tables and dart equipment and accessories, a video arcade and the coin laundry. Nancy sums up the situation, "we're comfortable now. Basically, we have a lot of confidence in Prince George and are looking forward to a good year."

Tom Griffiths is on good terms with the Federal Business Development Bank. "Basically, I became acquainted with the FBDB during my term as President of the Prince George Chamber of Commerce," he says.

Through this association, he was able to discover first hand, the services available to small and mid-size businesses.

The economy wasn't exactly buoyant when he and his wife Bev arrived in Prince George to open Sunland Subaru on First Avenue. Aware of what the FBDB had to offer, they added to their business knowledge by attending management and accounting seminars.

When the time came to expand, people from the FBDB worked with the Griffiths, helping them acquire their present site on 20th Avenue. It was the support and confidence of the FBDB that enabled them to not only stay in business but to expand and succeed. Soon the Volvo dealership was added to the well-accepted Subaru line.

The spring of 1988 saw Sunland Subaru-Volvo poised on the brink of another expansion. The FBDB assisted financially in enlarging and renovating the show room. The result is a very attractive building geared to the convenience of customers and staff.

"We felt very comfortable in our dealings with both, management and staff"

In discussing the Federal Business Development Bank, Tom Griffiths makes this observation, "I don't think a lot of people really understand the purpose behind the FBDB. Small Business Week, October 23 - 29 is an opportunity to find out.

"Taking advantage of the assistance available to small business offered by the FBDB will hopefully lead to better and stronger businesses in Prince George. We felt very comfortable in our dealings with both management and staff," he continues.



Gary Toop of West Fraser Electrical Services sums up his involvement in the Prince George business community by saying, "I moved here for two years - ten years ago."

His commitment to the area has resulted in the company being highly respected in the industry. Incorporated two and a half years ago, West Fraser Electrical has been built on people and skills, providing electrical apparatus service to industry. A team of ten highly skilled people with an average experience of 23 years put their expertise to work throughout the area. (Two West Fraser electricians were involved in moving The Citizen's presses to the new printing plant.)

Toop and his partner Don Forbes, both with corporate management experience formulated their own business plan when they started their own business. The difference between small and large business soon became apparent. "When you own your own business, you can't afford the luxury of resource people. There's no room on the staff for them."

The Federal Business Development Bank has resource people (counsellors), retired successful business advisers. An ex-banker edited the West Fraser Electrical Services' business plan and put them back on track. "The Case Counsellor brought his knowledge and experience to the meeting," says Toop. "His support gave us confidence."

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Later on, the FBDB was called on again, when the purchase of the building at 3937 - 22nd Avenue was being considered. A third party assessment provided the information and advice needed to proceed.

West Fraser Electrical maintains close contact with the FBDB by making use of the many other services offered including business seminars. Toop and Forbes find that outside input reinforces the ideas and methods of running a business. "Resources are powerful tools in running a business. The FBDB is very innovative in showing clients how to use the resources offered.

LOANS

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