

ENTREPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

Country Images Expands with Help of New Loan Fund & Enterprise Facilitation

Project Outcomes:

(June 2, 2003 to July 31, 2008)

- ◆ Total Clients Assisted: **456**
- ◆ Businesses Started: **34**
- ◆ Businesses Expanded: **13**
- ◆ Jobs Created: **122**
- ◆ Businesses Retained: **7**
- ◆ Jobs Retained: **31**
- ◆ Tune-Ups of Existing Businesses: **49**

For more information about Enterprise Facilitation, contact:

Facilitator
Janet Miller
785-364-0583 or
janetgriesel@hotmail.com

Board Chair
Jim McAnerney
785-989-3334 or
jimmary@carsoncomm.com

Country Images, owned and operated by Aleta and Steve Allen of Holton, specializes in custom laser engraving on products of all types. A few examples include: framed mirrors, high quality leather products, ornaments, trophies, and plaques. Though they do engraving for all types of events and interests, their primary focus is on western and livestock themed items.

Aleta explains that the company's focus on western and livestock items came about because of the family's involvement in events of this type. "We have raised and shown horses and livestock for many years and understand the need for unique and useful award items such as our engraved brushes." This, combined with the family's love of western décor, has slowly led them to do more and more work in this area.

However, the Allen's are more than happy to help out with that special gift for a new baby, retirement, anniversary, or any special event. And, they're eager to work with local businesses and groups



Aleta Allen talks with Facilitator Janet Miller at the 2008 Home, Garden, & Sports Expo

to create unique items for promotions or fundraisers.

While the business started in 2003, it recently received a boost in the form of a loan from the Northeast Kansas Rural Business Development Revolving Loan Fund. The loan has allowed the Allen's to expand their offerings to include a line of high quality leather portfolios, bible covers, notepads, business card cases, photo albums, and briefcases as well as increase their line of wall tributes. In addition to military and western wall tributes, they now offer school, sports, and religious themed tributes. The loan also allowed some much needed improvements to their home

based workspace.

When preparing her business plan and loan application, Aleta sought assistance from Enterprise Facilitation. "Janet has been a big help," Aleta said. "Without her, I'm not sure that I would have kept at it and gotten my plan finished."

To learn more about Country Images and what they have to offer, call 785-364-2873 or e-mail a@cimages.us. You can also visit their website (www.cimages.us) to see some of their more popular items. They carry many more products than those shown so be sure to call or e-mail if you do not see exactly what you are looking for.

Upcoming Events:

September 4, 2008

6:00 pm - Board Meeting at the Highland Community College Wellness Center, Highland, KS.

September 27, 2008

4:00 to 7:00 pm - Five-Year Celebration at the Fisher Community Center, Hiawatha, KS.