Golconda Grocery Boat

In November 2013, driving home from their previous jobs, Dakota Simmons, 24, and Tyler Taber, 25, were tossing around ideas on how they could form their own business and be their own bosses. They thought about the needs of the barges currently running on the Ohio River in Golconda and thought the barges needing additional supplies during the course of their trips up and down the river. After staying up till midnight trying to figure out how this idea could work, they came up with an idea of a grocery boat business.

They were apprehensive about their idea, but approached a local bank with it that liked the idea, but didn’t quite understand it and were told to contact the Workforce & Illinois Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Illinois College (WISBDC) for assistance with a business plan. They received a call from Todd Tracy, a counselor with the center, and he arranged to meet with them to hear more about their idea. Todd was the first person who thought the idea of a grocery boat shuttle service was a realistic and profitable business. He was influential in working with the bank over the course of several months to work out details for a commercial loan. He also provided insurance contacts and was there to assist them in any way possible. The loan would allow Dakota and Tyler to purchase a boat for the business, as well as to construct a building to place freezers to store supplies, as they may have a delivery at any time, day or night. After months of negotiations, in May 2014, they received the loan and from there, the Golconda Grocery Boat became a reality.

Officially opening in August 2014, they are presently working with two barge companies and are finalizing business with a third company. There are two more companies that the owners will be contacting in the near future. They work with an area grocery store, who packs the food and supplies for them. They pick up the order and deliver it to the barges on the river with a confirmed location. They also use an app called marinetraffic.com to locate the barge’s proximity to the delivery point. They have several points they have made deliveries to: Golconda, Metropolis and Cairo, IL as well as Columbus, Paducah, and Wickliffe, KY.

As of September 22nd, they had already made 15 trips to barges and had received another order that morning. The owners hope to hire one to two employees within the next year.

Dakota said, “Todd and the WISBDC made us feel like the idea was doable and Todd understood and believed in it from the beginning.” “If it were not for Todd’s assistance, we might not be in business right now,” Tyler stated.
The Workforce & Illinois Small Business Development Center is designed to assist owners and managers of small businesses or anyone wanting to start a business. Many of the services of the Center are available at no charge. Call (618) 252-5001 to learn about upcoming events and training opportunities.