

SUCCESS STORY

Portland District Office

Ernie's: New owners, Same Service

New computer software and just-delivered shipments blend with salvaged pump parts and original cabinetry to create what is truly a combination of old and new. Ernie's Electric and Ernie's Motors and Pumps were once two separate corporations started by John Ernest Wimsatt around 1948.

Today, they operate as one business, Two R's Electric, LLC, doing business as Ernie's Motors & Pumps. Located on South Oregon Street and taking up about three-quarters of the block is the business owned by Roy Scott and Randy Getman – the two "Rs." Scott's wife, Margie, is the business manager and bookkeeper. Both Scott and Getman were longtime employees of the business, working for Gerry Griffin. When Griffin began talking about selling the business, they began thinking about buying it.

"When we first started talking about taking over, we had no idea where to start," Margie Scott recalled. "Roy had known Dale Cruson, and it was his wife Cheryl who sent us to the **BizCenter**." "That's when we met Debi (DeBord). She bent over backwards to help us write our business plan," Roy Scott said.

"Our problem was we didn't realize she could help us after that. The Scotts said they went through a difficult time after being turned down by several lending institutions. Just when they were at their lowest, the BizCenter's Deb Carpenter called on them. "She asked us how it was going since they hadn't seen us in a while," Roy Scott said.

"When we told her what we'd been doing, Debi called us right away with 'Why didn't you tell me? I'm with you through the whole thing.'" The couple credits DeBord with holding their hands and encouraging them. "It took two years from the time we had the idea until the time we were finished." Roy Scott said. "There must have been 10 different times we thought this isn't worth it." Margie Scott rolled her eyes. "Like when our computer crashed and dumped our business plan," she added. "Debi kept pushing us in the right direction." "So many people give up just when success is around the next bend DeBord," said. "Randy, Roy and Margie are a true inspiration to future business owners, demonstrating that perseverance, persistence, and tenacity do pay off. Only by quitting, does one fail."

"The BizCenter is definitely an asset to the community," Roy Scott said. "Gerry had this for sale nationally at first, and when you think about that, someone else could have come in here, and just changed everything. "We're here providing the same high level of service this business has offered for so many years," he added. Of course, the current owners may be doing too good a job of blending the old with the new. "A lot of people will call and ask for Ernie," Margie Scott said. "But, then a lot of people think Gerry is Ernie, and a lot of people think Randy is Ernie. But Ernie's been dead a long time."

"I answer to anything," Roy Scott said, admitting that includes Ernie. "It's just funny to have someone call and say, 'Ernie was out here working on my pump last week, and ...'"

Diagnosed with a serious illness just when they bought the business, Getman works when he feels up to it. His long-time knowledge of the business is still a major asset for the Scotts, as is having Griffin work part-time. "Being the owner is a lot more work than I thought it would be," Roy Scott said. "I'm still learning. If it weren't for Gerry, I don't know. I'd been here for 17 years, but I didn't know the business side of things."

He also credits Getman's input for helping things to run smoothly. Getman, he added, has been with the Ernie's business since 1972. "With ownership, there's a lot more responsibility," Roy Scott said, referring to licenses, permits, and other regulatory requirements. "I guess I do enjoy it. It's good to be king." Margie Scott laughed. "Well, I'm just the boss in name," Roy Scott quickly added. "My wife is really the one who runs things." Like her husband, Margie Scott said she is still learning, too. She went to work for Griffin for several months as the bookkeeper while he still owned the business so there would be a smoother transition. But merging two corporations into one Limited Liability Corporation proved to be a little challenging for both her and her customers – many of whom began calling after receiving bills from a company with a strange name. Ultimately, according to Roy Scott, it's the customers who win with the business in the hands of long-time local residents.

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