

# A DAY in the LIFE OF...

## Small Business Owner in Vermillion

By Katie Clausen  
For the Plain Talk

Lots of Vermillion residents report to work, each morning, to a desk and a computer and they fill their day by performing a specialized task and being rewarded by the company they work for. For two brothers from Pierre, the work day description couldn't be any more different.

"Even though I knew it was going to be a lot of work, and everyone told me it was going to be a lot of work, I didn't realize it would be so all over the board of things you have to do," Brandon King said. "You have to do a little bit of everything."

King, and his brother Trevor, have run Vermillion's staple downtown pizza joint since the late sixties. Kings wife Allison helps as a co-owner as well.

Being a small business owner is a challenge, even when the economy is on the up and up. Small businesses have to struggle to maintain a good work force, source their products at low volume pricing and compete with larger businesses and corporations for ad space and customer base. A lot of the day is spent managing both people and situations.

"Daily we will be dealing with having to schedule," King said. "We have good employees, but sometimes people need time off and we have to cover for them. The daily surprises are challenging, there is always something coming up or something breaking or somebody getting sick."

Balancing the lives of employees to ensure the business runs smoothly is a large part of being a small

business owner. In addition to that, the Kings want their employees to get the most out of their working experience.

"We have six part time employees," King said. "Most of them have been college students, we just try to have them learn work ethic and good customer service besides the basic operational things. Having pride in your work, all the employees are proud to work at R-Pizza."

Being a small business owner often means you are the sole person responsible for a lot of areas of the business. Not one job specifically.

"Ordering food, maintenance, advertising, everything you do you to have a well-rounded skill set to pull it off," King said. "When you have multiple owners, let those people do what their better at and delegate tasks that way."

The King family makes it work by dividing out tasks for efficiency.

"My wife is more of the graphic designer, she has more of an eye of what looks good. I am more of the cook, I come up with recipes," King said. "Trevor is in charge of bookkeeping and things like that."

R- Pizza, a true to the term staple in Vermillion, is a business that lured the Kings in because of their passion to run their own storefront and provide people with a quality product. Vermillion is what originally brought Brandon King in as a student, and he decided to stay.

"It's a pretty good town," King said. "I'd say one of the nice things with the downtown restaurants is that even though we're in competition with each other there isn't a negative



Trevor King works away at R-Pizza during the tailend of a recent lunch hour. Trevor and his brother, Brandon, have taken their small business to quite a nice level of achievement in Vermillion.

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connotation to that.

All the restaurants are able to help each other out. If they ran out of something important they'll support you. In bigger towns you wouldn't necessarily be able to do that."

Daily, running a small business also takes plenty of discipline.

"You have to be self-motivated," King said. "There is nobody around to tell you hey this needs to be done, it all has to come from yourself."

In order to run the business smoothly, decisions must be made on a level playing field.

"We are slowly changing some things," King said. "We are adding a couple of new pizzas and new things here and there.

Especially larger decisions, things like changes to the menu; definitely we get together and discuss."

Another challenge is being able to keep the physical aspect of the business in good shape. As a small business owner, it is up to the people running the place to make sure its maintenance.

"Everything is constantly falling apart so we are always fixing," King said. "So we are doing a little remodeling and painting and getting new furniture."

Customer fluctuations are another part of running R-Pizza. The shop specializes in pizzas with crust made from scratch and quality ingredients, they often don't know what

the day will bring as far as patrons.

"Especially with college students we get busy," King said. "We are open and serve good food all the time, not just late at night. I think it's a family friendly place. Its food that everyone can enjoy, kids love pizza, too."

Since acquiring the business, King has continued to learn and grow in small business ownership.

"Even though I knew it was going to be a lot of work, and everyone told me it was going to be a lot of work, I didn't realize it would be so all over the board of things you have to do," King said. "You have to do a little bit of everything."

While the days are long and the list of challenges

equally as lengthy there are plenty of rewards to be reaped by running a small business.

"Not having a boss that's not always constantly telling you what to do," King said. "I've enjoyed that. It's rewarding to you because the work you put in is something for yourself as opposed to something going towards someone else."

King also likes the paced nature of the restaurant business and knowing he has a big investment in his business.

"Personally, the times I like the most are when it's really busy," King said. "That's how I originally got started was cooking food and making food so that's when I'm really in my element."

## YANKTON NOT FOOLING AROUND!

YANKTON, S.D. — Not much is expected of cities the size of Yankton these days. That needs to change, according to a new group of young and old leaders.

So it's no April Fool's joke that the Yanktonians intend to launch a new initiative on April 1 in the theater of the town's high school with students, teachers, business

and community activists and anyone interested.

And exactly what's the announcement?

Well, nobody's saying. The group called Onward Yankton has quietly formed, and members say they expect participation to expand.

"We hope this is the start of something big, but it's really up to all of the community," said Michelle Cwach, a farmwife and media relations manager at a local manufacturer. "We are starting at the high school because — I can say this much — we want to make Yankton a better place for

today's teens to live and work and raise their own families."

"We can't find any example of another community that has done something like what we're planning," said Tabitha Likness, another one of the early organizers of the mysterious project. Likness, who works at Mount Marty College, said an interesting mix of "old hands and newcomers" have come together to plan the launch.

The announcement will begin at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1, at a special meeting of One Million Cups, the entrepreneurial gathering that meets weekly in

Yankton. It will be held in the Yankton Senior High School theater.

Everyone is welcome.

The organizers will do a repeat performance at the Yankton Middle School at 1 p.m. on the same day. Other schools in the greater Yankton area are planning to live-stream the 9 a.m. event.

School officials from neighboring towns are also welcome to do the same by accessing the school's website.

Cwach said a Facebook page titled Onward Yankton has already been formed, and a website (onwardyankton.com) will go

live on the morning of April 1.

"We'd like to tell people to contact us for more information, but the truth is that we're not saying anything else until the morning of April 1," said Likness.

To access the live-stream channel, please visit [www.yisd.k12.sd.us](http://www.yisd.k12.sd.us). Under "Quick Links" on the right hand side of the page, click on YSD Web Streaming.

When the next page appears, click on "YHS Assembly" under Live & Upcoming events. The livestream will begin at 8:45 a.m.

- Courtesy of Onward Yankton

## NEW, From Page 1A

system and it has met with positive feedback.

"It's incredibly intuitive and user-friendly," she said. "It's a lot more like other kinds of website that people use whereas the old system was kind of archaic and not always user friendly. People will be able to navigate their way through the new system a lot easier."

Patrons will only be able to see the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the efficiency of the new system.

"For the most part, a lot of the changes are behind the scenes like checking in, checking out, putting books into the system, how we keep track of what's new and what needs to be done," Heggstad said. "So far it's incredibly easy and it's working really well. I would say the first day was a success. When we first encountered it we were so happy. We had no idea it could be that easy."

The system went live last week and library staff is already noticing a difference.

"When I came on last summer I had to start learning the system," Heggstad said. "I was just starting to get used to using the old system after six or seven months. I feel like I know most of this already. I'll probably have it down within a month."

Heggstad did not know the exact amount it cost to put in the new system but was confident that it was worth the undoubtedly significant amount.

"There have been discussions for several months now," she said. "It hadn't been decided because prices change depending on how many libraries participate and that sort of thing. It's not a cheap investment but considering what it does for us it's worth it."

While the system is new, many aspects of the library that patrons know and love will stay the same.

"We're not going to have fewer books or anything," Heggstad said. "It also doesn't change our structure. We still prioritize ordering books for patrons when they request them. We try to have a really good selection of new books regularly.

We keep books if they're popular. We tend to not get rid of books until it's clear they're not being used. At that point they always go through our Friends of the Public Library and sellable books are sold in Edie's Book Shop which supports the summer reading program."

Heggstad said the staff is very excited for the summer reading program as well as the other events the library has in the near future.

"The summer brings a lot of activity for children," she said. "We have lots of events, almost daily through the months of June and July. That's a big deal. We'll have a few events for adults."

One of the bigger events coming up soon is the celebration of National Library Week on April 12-18.

"We have events planned every single day for that," Heggstad said. "At the end of that week

we'll have a big bash where we honor our volunteers and we'll have door prizes. April's also National Poetry month so we'll have things smattered throughout the month to bring attention to that with a special event at the end of the month which I hope will catch on."

While Heggstad said May tends to be a calm month, things spice up again for the summer reading program.

"We're going to run the summer reading program a little differently than we did last year because Beth, the children's librarian is interested in doing things in a new and fun way so families will notice that," Heggstad said. "I'm probably going to make some shifts to the regular adult programming schedule."

"I kept things primarily on Wednesday evenings but it has turned out to not be the best day for things to happen in the evening so I'm probably going to be shifting things to Tuesday

or Thursday evenings."

As far as the long-term library future, Heggstad wanted to alleviate some concerns based on common questions.

"Sometimes people worry that soon we won't have any real books because everything will be digital," she said. "That's definitely not the case. I don't see most libraries even slowing down in providing print books. Library use continues to climb in most cities in most areas. No one needs to worry about books disappearing or even getting harder to come by."

On the other side of the coin, Heggstad said the library looks to be more involved than ever in digital literature as well as print.

"We do get a lot of questions about people try-

ing to understand e-readers and how to access that technology," Heggstad said. "It's getting easier all the time in some ways. It's more complicated in a way for us because there are so many devices and each one works slightly differently. What we do is work with people one on one."

"It's best if they call and set up an appointment. We have a couple of staff members who are very good at helping people set up an account with their readers."

The library also has resources for assistance in this area on their website as well as handouts.

"In the next couple of months I'm going to start making some tutorial videos people can easily download from our website to walk people through the steps," Heggstad said.

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