

One in a Ver Million

Meet Crystal Solomon

By David Lias
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Not long after her daughter, Bekki Engquist-Schroeder, moved her business, the Spa at Wynie Mae’s, to a new location in downtown Vermillion, Crystal Solomon knew it was time for her to make a move, too.

Crystal, who lives in Burbank and has been a South Dakota employee for seven years, couldn’t pass up the opportunity to follow a dream.

“I’ve always had the desire to have a business of my own – a small store of sorts,” she said. “And, I also felt that in my point in life, I was done working for other people and wanted to be my own boss.

“The opportunity came up when my daughter decided to move her salon to a larger space,” Crystal said. “The space that my store is in became available, and I downsized my thoughts

of an antique store, but kept with the theme of having homemade, local and regional artistry items, and trying to support local vendors.”

And so, one of downtown Vermillion’s newest shops opened in late February at 25 E. Main Street – occupying the front room at that address. It is aptly named The Front Porch. The adjoining back room is where The Spa at Wynie Mae’s is located, meaning Crystal and Bekki get to see each other on a daily basis.

“We are in the front, and I grew up with some very important ‘front porch’ people,” Crystal said. “I have a lot of great childhood memories from spending time on Grandma’s front porch, and so it seemed appropriate with Bekki’s business being themed after her grandmother, that mine is after my grandmother as well.”

One can find a few small antique items at



The Front Porch, “but it’s not my main focus,” Crystal said. “It just adds to the variety of the assortment of items I have for sale. I’ve leaned more towards the home-made, and local art.”

Her business also features South Dakota-made items.

“Some of the products are not home-made; for instance, my coffee is roasted in the Rapid City area,” Crystal said. “And many, many local people have their wares on sale here. A few of the items are crocheted items, scarves, and much of the artwork that I have here,

including watercolor, stained glass, mosaics, and acrylics.”

People standing in the middle of The Front Porch can look through a large window and get an appealing view of Vermillion’s vibrant Main Street.

“We couldn’t have gotten in at a better location, and we are exciting about being downtown and helping to revitalize the traffic and make it a fun place to visit,” Crystal said. “We hope people, when they visit downtown, will patronize all of the businesses on Main Street. It’s becoming a destination.”

She is excited about the activities that the Downtown Vermillion Action Team has helped coordinate for the planned “Sensational Saturday” in Vermillion on June 1. That day’s activities include retail specials downtown from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Heartland Humane Society’s second annual Taste & Tour in over 10 downtown locations from 6:30 to 10 p.m., W.H. Over Rhubarb Days from 10 to 11:30 a.m., and the dedication of the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library at 2 p.m. Sen. Tim Johnson will be in attendance at that event. “Everything is coming

together,” Crystal said, surveying the items offered for sale at The Front Porch. “It took a little bit of trial and error in bringing items in and seeing what people like, and I’m sure it’s going to be a continuous learning process.”

Part of that process includes finding new items and meeting new vendors that are potential clients

“My favorite part about being here,” she said, “is actually meeting the members of the community and visitors to town. The profession I was in prior to this was office work, and you meet a certain group of people, but it’s not the same as actually being out working in the community.

“This is my little corner of the world, and I’m liking it,” Crystal said. “I’m glad to be here, and this is a great opportunity.”

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