



Louisiana Small Business Development Center

For Immediate Release

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Husband and Wife Go from Employees to Employer with Help From LSBDC

(Moss Bluff, LA) Patrick and Melissa Mele collectively spent more than seven years working for the business they would eventually acquire thanks to assistance from the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) at McNeese State University.

The LSBDC in Lake Charles partners with Louisiana Economic Development, U.S. Small Business Administration, and McNeese State University to provide one-on-one business consulting at no cost to the small business owner. The center also provides low-cost business training. These services are aimed at helping business owners and entrepreneurs start, grow, and expand their companies.



Patrick & Melissa Melee, owners, Moss Bluff Mower Sales

“We were both already putting in 55 to 60 hours working for someone else, so we were really ready to own our own business. When the opportunity came along for us to buy Moss Bluff Mower Sales, we needed assistance with financing. Our LSBDC consultant, Kyle Ardoin, was indispensable in helping us put together a business plan, financial projections, and a loan package. We’ve also attended numerous LSBDC seminars to sharpen our business skills,” said Melissa Mele, co-owner of Moss Bluff Mower Sales.

Moss Bluff Mower Sales is one of the largest mowers, parts and generator sales, and small engine repair businesses in the booming community of Moss Bluff outside of Lake Charles. Founded 25 years ago, Moss Bluff Mower expanded from a small mom & pop shop to a 6800 square foot showroom and warehouse. Under the ownership of the Meles, Moss Bluff Mower Sales continues to grow.

“It was a relief to own our business, because we could do things our way. Without the assistance from the LSBDC at McNeese, we would not have had such a smooth transition from employees to employer. Despite all our years of industry experience, we didn’t have any idea about financing. Our consultant, Kyle, was very comforting yet straight-forward. He supported us every step of the way. It’s great to have someone to rely on,” praised Melissa.

Melissa worked more than 21 years in the small engine and mower business. Patrick spent 30 years in retail management. Together, this husband and wife team brought more than half-a-century of know-how to the business, and the results of their hard work had an immediate impact. Within the first year, the company’s sales grew 10 percent over the previous year. They added another full-time job and another part-time job, bringing the number of employees to five full-time workers, and three part-time workers.

“During this economic slow-down, sales in our repairs department have really grown. We also did very well last year with generator sales because of the hurricanes. Our philosophy is to provide the best customer service,” said Melissa.

According to an independent economic impact study for Louisiana, LSBDC clients experience a 25 percent greater increase in sales and an 11 percent greater increase in employment levels as compared to the average Louisiana business.

To contact the LSBDC at McNeese, call 337-475-5529 or email lsbdc.msu@lsbdc.org.



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