

By Mary Pierce

Keith County News

When Jeremy Klima left Grant in 2000, college and a career were on his agenda. The notion that he'd one day move back to the area was far from his mind. Yet, today, starting his sixth week of operating a branch office of Specialized Engineering Solutions, an Omaha-based firm he helped build almost seven years ago, Klima is excited about the potential growth of the business.

"Being able to help so many people along the way has truly been a joy," Klima said. "I look forward to what is yet to come and being able to get back to my roots."

While the majority of the Omaha-based engineering firm's clients are located in the eastern part of the state, having a branch office at Ogallala will allow the company to expand, as well as serve its current clients "to the west" in an efficient and cost-effective manner.



Klima, a Grant native and 2000 graduate of Grant High School, said when the company was looking to expand west, his first thought was to locate the business in his hometown. After all, his wife, Lauren (Poppe) owns a successful business, Image Total Fitness, in the southwest rural community.

So, when Klima learned about the West Central Nebraska Development District's (WCNDD) business incubator, located at Ogallala, he knew it was a perfect fit.

WCNDD Director Karl Elmshaeuser said the business incubator allows a business to grow during the often vulnerable early years.

"The first three years are the most critical for a start up business," he said.

In addition to providing office space at a reduced cost for up to three years, being a part of the business incubator gains access to a multitude of training and guidance opportunities, including one-on-one business coaching, and classroom training on business planning, product and service analysis, budgeting and finances, taxes, payroll, staffing, customer service, health care, and marketing and design.

For qualifying businesses, financing also could be available.

"At the WCNDD Business Incubator, it is our mission to create an environment where entrepreneurs can thrive by producing viable, successful companies which provide abundant benefits to the communities they serve," Elmshaeuser said. "Our success is measured by the lasting footprint business owners leave on their community by creating jobs that make a difference."

While at Omaha, the majority of Specialized Engineering Solutions' clients were in the health care industry, Klima said. Yet, the engineering firm can do so much more, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing and technology engineering.

“We have the opportunity for a much broader scope of projects out here,” he said.

Klima said having the Ogallala office allows him to better serve current customers at Sidney and Sterling, Colo., which produces results that are more cost effective for both the client and the company.

It also allows him to begin to make contact with city, county, educational, worship and health care entities in Keith and the surrounding counties.

“We do community development, from assessing the current conditions to design, planning and budgeting,” he said.

While Klima is still getting settled in his office, he has begun to get into the community, meet people and let them know the services Specialized Engineering Solutions can provide.

“I’m not a salesman—I just want them to know what services we can provide,” Klima said. “We are an added resource in the community.”

In the future, Klima hopes that the business outgrows the incubator and that it also provides additional jobs in the community.

“It’s a personal goal of mine to help grow these communities,” he said.

For more information on WCNDD’s business incubator, contact Elmshaeuser at (308) 284-6077, or visit the website www.wcndd.org and view Business Incubator.