

2009 Emerging Business of the Year



Long's Ranch & Pet Supply



Owner	Barrett and Stacie Long
Nature of Business	Retail
City	Clay Center
County	Clay
Phone	785 - 632- 6333
Business Structure	S Corporation
Business Began	2004
Employees	9 including Barrett and Stacie
KSBDc Consultant	Linda Sutton

“We contacted the KSBDC as we were investigating opening a business. We were interested in finding out what programs were available to a young couple just starting out and were able to use Linda Sutton’s assistance to start our business.”

Barrett and Stacie Long, Owners



Customers enjoy the customer loyalty program and other new features at Long's Ranch & Pet Supply.

Like many young couples, Barrett and Stacie Long had to take jobs that required long commutes from Lawrence to Kansas City and Topeka. Stacie yearned to return to her rural roots on a farm outside of Clay Center and raise a family there.

In 2003, the Long's began exploring the possibility of returning to rural Kansas and starting their own business. Clay Center is a thriving agricultural community, and the couple saw the need for ranch and pet supplies in the community. They contacted Linda Sutton at the NCK SBDC to assist bringing their dream to a reality. Linda saw this as a great opportunity to return a young couple to the NCK region and open a new business. After creating a business plan and cash flow projections, the Long's determined that it was feasible to open and have a new building built for the store.

After spending almost a year preparing, the couple opened Long's Ranch & Pet Supply in October 2004. Barrett, 32, has been able to use his Business Marketing degree and management experience in warehousing to research his competition, handle pricing and ordering, and find new ways to improve the store. Stacie, 30, has used her financial background to focus on the bookkeeping and human resources for the business.

Secret to Success

“The secret to our success is that we prepared correctly. We found suppliers, financing, and real estate before we made the decision to quit our current jobs and open a business.”

Stacie and Barrett have managed the store to a 28% growth over four years and expanded to seven employees. They continue to improve their store. They added a new feed line, Red Flannel, to meet the demands of customers. Their POS System tracks inventory items as well as customers. The new loyalty program assists in reaching “lost” customers and rewards repeat business with store credit. They added a “Dog Wash” dog grooming area within the store and purchased bait shop supplies from a closing business in Clay Center to reach additional markets. With the assistance of the NCK SBDC and Clay County Economic Development, Long's Ranch & Pet Supply received funding from the Clay County Revolving Loan and StartUp Kansas.

There was clearly a need for a ranch and pet supply store in Clay Center, and the store is projected to reach over one million dollars in sales in 2009. Today, Barrett and Stacie are living the “American Dream.” They are raising their two small children in a rural community, and they own their own business.

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