

Upcoming Workshops

Click on events below for more details.

- o **NX Level Leading Edge Durango - 10/06 6:00 pm**
- o **Colorado Entrepreneurship Market Place -10/07 8:00 am**
- o **Marketing for Smarties Pagosa - 10/11 6:00 pm**
- o **Starting Your Business Workshop Durango - 10/13 8:00 am**

Receive Free Business Counseling

Freenotes Harmony Park of Durango, Colorado

By Malia Durbano



Richard and Christy Cooke are so grateful to the SW Colorado Small Business Development Center for consulting with them and putting them in touch with valuable resources to assist them in growing and expanding their business. Thanks to the help of the SW CO SBDC their company is experiencing 100% growth in 2011.

Originally, a small cottage industry business, started by Richard Cooke in 1990 in Moab, Utah, FHP was at capacity in 2009. They were working long hours, needed more employees and more production space. Cooke

invented and manufactures an innovative, outdoor musical instrument that everyone can play called Freenotes. These marimba like instruments are played with mallets and are perfectly tuned so regardless of which note you hit it always sounds beautiful.

Joe Keck, their initial contact, subsequently connected them with the SBDC Business Advisor Network and Ed Morlan of Region 9 Economic Development District. Morlan assisted them in acquiring a Region 9 loan that catapulted them from a small cottage industry business selling directly to end users into a commercial manufacturer and nation-wide wholesaler of musical instruments.

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Business Mentor of the
SBDC...[Learn more
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Additionally, Christy Cooke, his wife and CEO, became part of the mentoring program and learned first-hand about distribution, manufacturing and sales from another wholesale manufacturing company in the program. The Cooke's also worked with the CEO Network and received help writing their strategic business plan and learned about acquiring venture capital from other local business owners. She was then introduced to Roger Zalneraitis of the La Plata County Economic Alliance, who is helping FHP search for a larger manufacturing facility.

As a result of the assistance provided by the SW Colorado SBDC, they have totally transformed their business into one that has grown, provided additional managerial and manufacturing jobs in the community and plans to continue growing to include world-wide distribution.



Small Business Development Center

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