

Boot camp beneficial for growing business

Editor's note: This is the third of six features on downtown businesses that attended a recent boot camp.

BY KARLA POMEROY
Boomerang Staff Writer

With his business at his new location on Second Street starting to grow, Leo Pueblitz, owner of Big Hoss Mountain Sports was excited but slightly apprehensive in attending the business boot camp by Jon Schallert in September.

Pueblitz said he wasn't sure about taking three days from his business to attend the camp but he was glad he made the choice. He said the business was growing fast and doing well but he also knew there were things he could do to make it better.

"Jon Schallert was good at making me aware of things I could do to make my business better," Pueblitz said.

"I'm so glad I went. It gave me a better focus," he said. Pueblitz added that the camp was intense. "The whole time I was there, light bulbs were going off in my head." He said he wants to return to the camp next year and plans on encouraging other business owners to attend.

"If we all stick together and help each other we can make our businesses places where people want to go and bring more traffic into Laramie," Pueblitz said.

When he came back from the camp, Pueblitz said there were three things he wanted to do. The first thing was the easiest to accomplish, and that was changing the window display of the store at 202 S. Second. He said he struggled with putting together window displays.

The second thing was hiring someone to finish Big Hoss Mountain Sports' shopping

cart on the Web site, www.bighosswyo.com. Pueblitz said he hopes to kick off an online business by the end of the year. He said the basement of the store provides adequate storage room and room for a shipping department.

The third item, Pueblitz said, is that he is bringing in a monument to help attract customers to his store. He said he did not want to disclose exactly what the monument is at this time, but noted, "It will become our signature. It will be different."

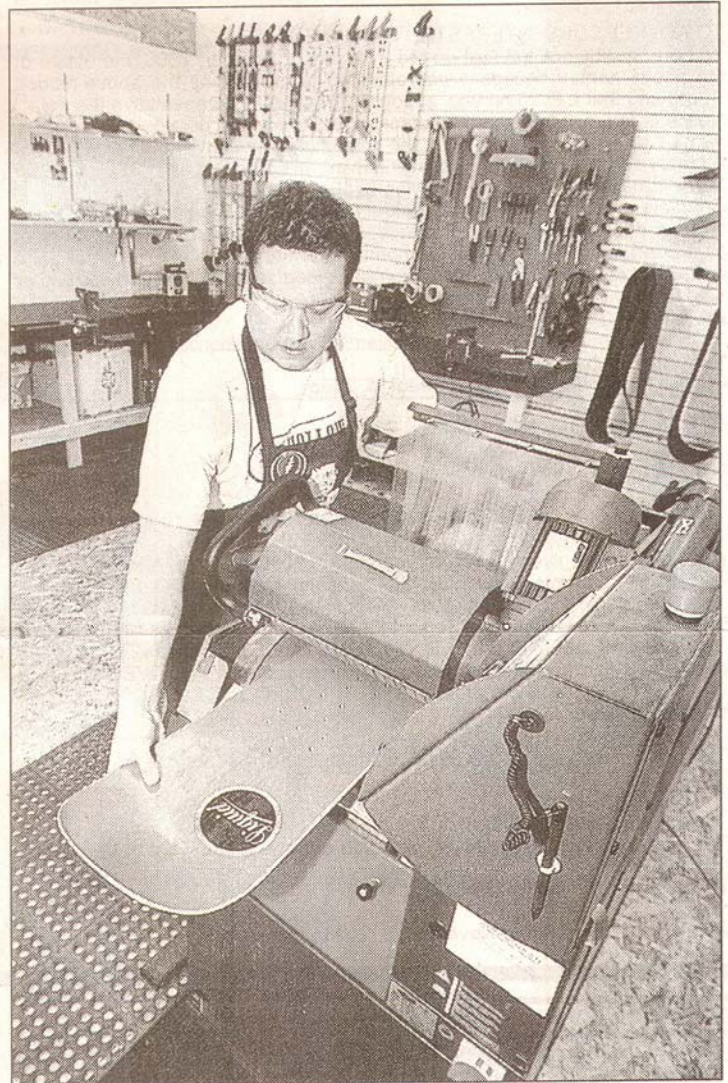
Pueblitz said he likes Schallert's marketing techniques because the tools provide ways for business owners to better market their business while still retaining Laramie's small town atmosphere.

Schallert will be visiting Big Hoss Mountain Sports today, and Pueblitz said he is looking forward to the personal advice that Schallert can provide from the visit. He said after attending the camp, he knows Schallert will provide constructive advice for him.

Pueblitz said he is striving to make his mountain sports store different from other outdoor stores. He is on his way. Big Hoss Mountain Sports offers products for all types of skiers and snowboarders in the winter. In the summer, they offer rock climbing gear, kayaking and hiking gear.

He said they are the only store in Wyoming, as far as he knows, that resoles climbing shoes. They also sell shoes and people can try the shoes out at the climbing wall located in a corner of the store that was constructed by climbing enthusiast Bob Scarpelli.

Pueblitz said he started the business to cater to university and WyoTech students but noted he has something for any outdoor



ROB DENSMORE/Boomerang photographer

Leo Pueblitz, owner of Big Hoss Mountain Sports, runs a snowboard through a sand grinder at his store on South Second.

recreationist.

Although he has a large inventory of retail items, Pueblitz said his focus for his store is on service. Along with offering the resoling service for rock climbers, Big Hoss Mountain Sports also offers tuning for skis and snowboards. A sand grinder cleans the bottom of the ski or snowboard and "makes it like new," Pueblitz said. He said they receive a lot of business

for tuning skis from the high school and university team members.

Pueblitz said the tuning business was started in 2004 in his garage. They opened a small storefront on Grand for retail items and in May of this year, Big Hoss Mountain Sports moved to Second Street where the retail and services could be combined into one location.