

A CRAFT WINERY EMERGES FROM THE PANDEMIC

ABOUT BLACK MESA WINERY. Jerry and Lynda Burd have operated Black Mesa Winery, the Velarde, New Mexico winery they purchased from the original owners who founded it in 1992, for 21 years. Three years ago, the Burds added hard cider to their production of award-winning wines. The winery's 12 employees create adult beverages from grapes and apples grown on-site or purchased from nearby small producers and the tasting room overlooking the vineyard is a tourist destination on Highway 68, the main artery between Santa Fe and Taos. The winery sells to regional restaurants and bars, wine club members, and consumers from more than 35 states who select products from their website.

THE CHALLENGE. When the coronavirus pandemic temporarily halted tourist traffic and shuttered restaurants and bars throughout New Mexico, the winery had an inventory worth \$100,000 and fewer avenues to deliver its products to customers. The Burds were able to keep products moving out the door through online wine tasting events, shipments to its more than 400 wine club members, and creative drive-by tours that kept customers engaged. With time on their hands and employees to keep occupied, they contacted New Mexico MEP Innovation Director Scott Bryant, part of the MEP National Network™, to help them consider changes that could streamline processes, open new markets, and increase market share when the pandemic ended.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Utilizing growth strategies and lean methodologies, Bryant broke down each step involved in producing the winery's 30 wines and four flavors of cider. To improve efficiency, Bryant suggested shortening the distance between production and shipping operations to minimize the time spent filling orders and he urged the closure of gaps between different processes by adding wheels to equipment that is used in more than one place. He also suggested switching to a lightweight packaging system that could save transportation and shipping costs and minimize handling.

"What Scott challenged us to do is question how do you make this happen more quickly, how do you make the process flow. You make the wine flow through a hose; you don't move the tanks. You make the cider flow from beginning to end in one building. He helped us see how a minute here and a minute there adds up to a lot in a year. We're not working any longer hours and we're not working harder. We are getting more done. He brought his experience, and he's very good at getting everybody to put in their part and to feel that they're being heard."

-Jerry Burd, Co-owner

RESULTS



\$50,000+ in cost savings



15% increase in 2021 sales over 2019 after retaining sales through the pandemic

CONTACT US



8600 San Mateo Blvd. NE
Suite 100
Albuquerque, NM 87113



(505)262-0921



www.newmexicomep.org

