



Aimee Waddell stands behind the front counter at Aimee's Attic Consignment, where 32 vendors can run their own small businesses.

A Redesigned Business

Local entrepreneur adapts to changes in the economy to keep her business thriving in Goldendale

By Jeanie Senior

Aimee Waddell surveys the new layout for her Aimee's Attic Consignment store in downtown Goldendale. She points to the 32 booth spaces that after May 1 will be occupied by local artists, crafters, seamstresses, weavers, collectors and more.

"My hope for this endeavor is for 32 people to have their own small business," Amy says. "With this economy the way

it is, we have to look at ourselves, see where our talents are and how we can be entrepreneurial."

During March and April, the space at the corner of 100 East Main was transformed from an all-consignment store to a mall with many offerings—and a lot of community involvement.

There still will be a consignment area at the back of the building, stocked with a new batch of consignment goods, including clothing, furniture, books, videos and tools.

"I am really praying this works," Aimee says of the re-purposed downtown store and its emphasis on more vendors.

She opened her first retail business, Aimee's Attic, in Goldendale in 2003. It

doubled in size within a year and a half, and she and her husband, Rick, moved it into the former Reno's Pizza building on East Broadway.

The Broadway store, divided into several display areas, carries a captivating variety of merchandise, from new furniture and Sealy mattresses to new clothing for men, women and children, as well as home decor, jewelry, collectibles, antiques, books and dolls.

"I had always been a career person; I worked in the furniture industry," Amy says. "Then I got married and started having lots of babies—four in 3½ years. I realized, staying at home, cooking and cleaning, that I needed to meet some people, be around other adults."

The first store, across the street from



In addition to selling used clothing, Aimee's Attic Consignment sells new clothing for men, women and children.

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—Aimee Waddell, owner of Aimee's Attic Consignment

the present Aimee's Attic, included an office and space devoted to a playroom and a nap room for her sons.

"I said, 'I'll keep them with me, I'm just going to have a little business,'" she says. "Right after I opened that store I discovered I was pregnant with a fifth baby. Literally, this town has watched him grow up. Within a year and a half, the business was growing faster than I was prepared for."

Now, with all of her boys in school, she schedules her days so she can leave home after they go to school, and she is there to greet them when the bus brings them home.

Aimee, who traces her roots to Glenwood, learned the furniture business in Portland, first working at Smith's Home Furnishings, then for

Chicago-based Wickes Furniture. She earned an award for \$1 million in furniture sales in one year, for outstanding achievement and salesmanship ability, and also ranked as the company's ninth-highest producing sales person nationwide.

The knowledge and education Aimee gained at Smith's and Wickes stand her in good stead, she says, when she selects the furniture sold at Aimee's Attic. She orders furniture from San Francisco and, for mattresses, can piggyback her order with a store in The Dalles.

"That was a big accomplishment to get the Sealy mattress account," she says. "They usually only deal with bigger stores."

The still-struggling economy has brought plenty of challenges. Her

business now has three employees.

"I had up to eight, but with this economy, it's just been kicking me down," she explains.

That's one reason for the changes at the consignment store. There, it wasn't lack of consignors that was the problem; Amy had more than 1,100 consignors from Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Rather, it was the amount of space dedicated to low-dollar merchandise.

"If it's not working any more, you either fold up or you change your path," she says. "I wanted to keep the business for Goldendale, so we had to do it where we could afford it.

"To me, it's being a part of the community. If I have something to offer this community, that's what's important. It's not what I take home for a paycheck." ■