

YOUR

NEWBERRY COUNTRY CHAMBER CONNECTION

"We are the hub of the business community, promoting commerce and tourism making La Pine a vibrant community to work, live and play!"

COUNTRY FINANCIAL - Owner: Andy Meeuwsen

So, Andy, when did you open Country Financial? "I started with the company up in Bend in 2001 and five years later I was ready to open a local office here in town."

Are you the main player at Country Financial? "I manage the business with the help of Linda Couch, who has been with me for nine years and Connie Isgar who is here for the past five years. We work as a good team to provide good customer service."

Why do you work, live and play in La Pine? "I am a small town kid and I wanted to raise my family the same way. We moved here in 1998 because my wife had a new job. We love the area and the community."

What is the potential for growth for a business like yours? "People always need insurance, so, even though we have been going through an economic downturn, my business has been stable. I am happy though, because now we are on an uptick again!"

What is your business's greatest challenge? "The economy has really been the number one challenge for nearly everyone. We also have a lack of family wage jobs in La Pine and that makes it more difficult, too. The formation of the City's new LED (La Pine Economic Development) Committee will hopefully be the beginning in making changes to the economy of La Pine in the future."

What is the biggest highlight of your career? "When I started my own business here it was great! I have a feeling and a measure of success that spurs me on and I know that the possibilities are in front of me."

What do you do to relax? "My family and I go camping all over Oregon. We love it. The kids are in sports so we participate in those activities, too."

Tell us something about yourself that few people know about: "I actually grew up in a little town called Banks, Oregon west of Portland. I was a Dairy farmer. I went to La Grande to Eastern Oregon University and I am considering working with a close friend to start DJing a music program on KITC radio. I did it in college and loved it!"

In terms of volunteering in the community, what is your personal contribution to the community? "I served as a board member on the Chamber Board for four years and was the treasurer from 2008-2009. It was a scary time and I was able to keep the Chamber in the black. I also am a sports coach (basketball and football) for the children, I am the finance officer at Holy Redeemer Church and I am the President of the Deschutes County BNI Networking group. My appointment to the City Committee for LED will be significant for our city."

What are your plans for the future? "I will finish raising my family and hope to live here for the next thirty years! This is home."

What advice would you give to community leaders? "I would love it if the City would reach out to what I call the 'silent businesses' to determine what they are thinking. It would be great to have a two way conversation between the shy and not outspoken people who work to support the economy to know what they need."

Do you have a mission? "The company mission is to be the best provider of financial security in Newberry Country."

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