

Showcasing the Six: Sham Pooches

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – The six businesses chosen to be showcased on season three of *The Small Business Revolution* were revealed last Friday night at Alton's Broadway bash by show host Amanda Brinkman and this season's co-host, Ty Pennington of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

Those businesses announced were: Lighthouse Sounds, Lovett's, Today's Beauty Supply, Bluff City Outdoors, Morrison's Irish Pub and Sham Pooches. The last of those, a creatively-named dog groomer, began its life in the business incubator at the Milton Schoolhouse before moving to a building of its own last December. It is currently located at 1735 Main Street. Owner, Alicia Jeffreys, said she has been grooming dogs for 13 years, having originally learned the trade as a senior in high school.

“I haven't done anything else since,” Jeffreys said. “And, I love it!”

Sham Pooches attempts to be a relaxing spa experience for its canine clients, Jeffreys said. She runs the operation with Kylie Wood – her first hired employee she brought into the crew last August. Together, the two groom dogs on an appointment-only basis.

Jeffreys said her entire business is based on the comfort and care of those canine clients, adding she has a walk-in shower large enough for the biggest dogs. She said that shower is easier on the hips and bodies of older pooches as well as large ones.

“It's much easier for older dogs and large ones,” she said. “They don't have to be picked up at waist-level and put in the tub. We want the grooming to be a positive experience instead of a stressful one. We don't want our canine clients to be stressed out. We try to make grooming day like a day at the spa.”

When asked how she reacted to discovering she had been chosen to be showcased on the show, Jeffreys said she was so excited, she honestly does not remember.

“I don't even remember what I said when they told me,” she said. “The first five minutes of me finding out is still a blur. I think I might have told them to shut the front door.”

Producers of *The Small Business Revolution* put her mind at ease, Jeffreys said, when they did a walk-through of the business and followed it with subsequent meetings at Old Bakery Beer Company. Jeffreys said she is trying to get over the shock of being chosen before the crew returns after Easter to begin filming.

She said she is not yet sure what aspects of her business she wants *The Small Business Revolution* and its sponsor, Minneapolis-based Deluxe Corporation, to assist with a

portion of a \$500,000 investment being spread across all six chosen businesses and the city itself, but she said she is definitely interested in the specialty of Deluxe Corporation – marketing.

“We did a walk-through, and I talked about some upgrades for the sake of efficiency,” she said. “I definitely need some help in marketing, which is what they specialize in. I would really like to get my name out there more. This is my first time running a business, and I'm doing OK, but I'm definitely winging it. I could use their help with the knowledge of how to run a small business. I'm most excited about having all that knowledge from them at my fingertips.”

Overall, Jeffreys said she is excited for the five other businesses chosen for the show as well as Alton in general. She said Alton often has a negative light on it, and said that view was undeserved. She said it was “about time” something so overwhelmingly positive happened to the city.

Appointments for dog grooming can be made at (618) 419-3833.