



Empyre Laundry uses Illinois SBDC Metro East at SIUE expertise to launch family owned laundromat

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has equipped Empyre Laundry with the expertise to successfully launch its first laundromat in East St. Louis. Empyre Laundry's ribbon cutting takes place from 9:30 -11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 19, at 3600 State St.

Empyre Laundry owner Maria Jones has been passionately working on her business with guidance and support from SBDC graduate assistant Adrine (Renny) Krikorian for approximately one year. The Greater East St. Louis Business Development Association (GEBDA), Jones and the SBDC welcome the community to attend and support the newest business in East St. Louis.

Krikorian has aided Jones in writing and reviewing her business plan, providing market research, and registering as a limited liability company (LLC), as well as marketing and other referrals. SBDC Director Jo Ann DiMaggio May has also provided her expertise regarding financial assistance.

“I totally love Renny,” Jones said. “Renny has helped with more than just the paperwork and business aspect. She has helped me to handle the stress and uneasy emotions of starting your own business. She has been a constant support during this entire process.”

Empyre Laundry is a commercial-grade, self-service laundry and laundry cleaning service establishment. Customers will be able to utilize a clean, comfortable and safe setting with various sized washers and dryers. They also offer a drop-off service for 90 cents per pound.

Jones has always wanted to be an entrepreneur, and she is finally seeing that dream come true. She recognized opportunity in East St. Louis, as there is only one other laundromat in the area.

She wants to provide the area with an accessible laundromat, as well as offer customers a comfortable and more relaxing atmosphere while managing their laundry.

Her biggest victory has been working through the entire start-up process. She is extremely thankful to provide for others, as well as her family.

“Maria worked extremely hard to get this business up and running,” Krikorian said. “She did a great job of aligning the right team of lenders, suppliers and other outside sources. I hope her initiative inspires other entrepreneurs to consider East St. Louis when opening a business.”

Jones wants to let others know that while it is difficult to start a business, it is definitely worth it. Entrepreneurs may face troubles with bringing a business concept to life, but the SBDC can ably assist in the process.

Hours of operation are 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Sunday. For more information, call 618-857-2142 or visit empyre-laundry.business.site.

The Illinois SBDC for the Metro East assists start-up ventures like Empyre Laundry, as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in

part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and SIUE as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region's economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the region to support the goals and objectives of both the SIUE School of Business and the University at large.

To learn about the SBDC, contact the IL SBDC for the Metro East at SIUE at (618) 650-2929.