

Best Small Business

Ultimate Sports Arena

Walt and Darlene Lashley wanted to open an indoor sports arena capable of providing full-sized basketball and volleyball courts to male and female athletes. Their vision was to have a facility that would be open seven days a week for seven months out of the year. They came to the Macomb County MI-SBTDC in search of the necessary financial assistance for them to accomplish their dream.

Bob Madigan, Business Consultant, met with the Lashley's and first established their legal structure, determining that an LLC would best satisfy the needs of their business. A business plan was also developed in which the decision was made to remain open year round. In addition, they decided to focus their marketing strategy upon high schools and middle schools, promoting the facility and programs to be offered. With the use of the site and building inventory database, Walt and Darlene chose a facility in Chesterfield Township due to its rapid population growth. The Lashleys, along with their partners Wayne and Colleen Wickersham, obtained an SBA loan through National City Bank.

Ultimate Sports Arena opened June 1st 2005, immediately hosting leagues, tournaments and summer camps. To further increase sales, they have added batting cages, catering to local professional baseball players who bring in additional clients as well. Just as their business plan projected, at seven months they are at the breakeven point, suggesting that the 2006 fiscal year will prove to be profitable.



Walt Lashley and Bob Madigan