

## NJSBDC Success 2007 Winners / 2007-Raritan-CC-Winner

12/20/2007



Toni and Jeff MacDade  
The Country Mechanic  
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The love of farming flows through the veins of Toni and Jeff MacDade. The MacDades began grain farming in 1980. As a farmer, Jeff learned how to maintain and repair farm equipment to save on expenses. After

14 years of farming, the MacDades faced a variety of economic uncertainties and challenges, so they decided to sow seeds of another kind. They parleyed Jeff's mechanical repair experience into a new venture, giving rise to a small business called The Country Mechanic.

To gain further knowledge of diesel technology Jeff enrolled in the Somerset County Technical Institute (SCTI) and received his degree in May of 1995. Soon after his graduation they purchased a repair truck and The Country Mechanic went on the road conducting on-site repairs. The new business venture created the need for a bookkeeper so Toni enrolled in several classes at SCTI. From 1995 to 2005 the MacDades saw their little business grow from two to four employees, with revenues of \$327,000.

In January of 2005 they decided to expand their business by selling Montana tractors, tractor implements, parts, ATVs, scooters and farm accessories. With expansion came unforeseen operational and record keeping challenges so in February of 2006 they sought counseling and training assistance from the NJSBDC at Raritan Valley Community College. Assistant director Bill Harnden worked extensively with the MacDades on record keeping and improvement of office efficiency. According to Toni, "Bill helped us get organized. His assistance in revising the general ledger accounts enabled us to post entries properly and make better financial evaluations of our business. Our record keeping became more complicated with the floor planning of our equipment but the training that he has provided made the transition easy. If he didn't prepare us we would have had problems."

In March of 2006 the MacDades decided that a one-truck mobile operation limited their sales and so they opened a retail store at 472 State Hwy 31 in Ringoes, New Jersey. Several months later they opened a second shop at the Quakertown Farmers Market in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. The new stores increased their staff from four to six employees and in 2006 generated annual revenues of \$551,000. Their

projected sales for 2007 are \$600,000. “The MacDades competitive edge is their honesty and work ethic,” said Bill Harnden. “They are very loyal to their clients and their clients are loyal to them.”

Currently, the MacDades are working with the SBDC to obtain a \$1 million loan package to purchase the 37-acre tract their Ringoes store sits on. The acquisition will allow them to add repair bays and expand their sales operations, which all points to a very bright future for The Country Mechanic.