

## Raising the Bar

### Increases in Production

First Roast Sessions  
of the Year:

2013 = 7.5lbs

2014 = 17lbs

**2015 = 82lbs**

### Increases in Sales

2013 = \$10K

2014 = \$58K

**2015 = \$117K**

## *Greene Bean Coffee - Entrepreneurial Success*

Rich and Reagan Osborne and their son Mason, then 6, moved from Colorado to Greene County in 2007 after finding two barns on a bike trail near a community that they chose because of its “Mayberry-ness”. One thing that they found lacking was a source of fresh roasted beans to satisfy their insatiable love of coffee.

Rich and Reagan are consummate entrepreneurs and began looking for a way to “do it themselves”. Reagan had received an introduction to the coffee business by working as a barista in Colorado. They started writing a plan to turn a dream into reality.

### *Business Beginnings*

The idea of roasting their own beans seemed to be a great way to test the specialty coffee market in rural Iowa before making the leap to a full coffeehouse. Within three years, they had outgrown three coffee roasters, each one bigger than its predecessor.

Word of mouth recommendations fueled sales in the early years and still do to some extent. As a home based business for its first three years, finding sales outlets like the Iowa Food Co-op, Great Iowa Gifts, and even at The Printer's Box in Jefferson were important. But catering to local coffee drinkers has always been the primary focus. Direct-to-customer sales at the Greene County Farmers' Market built relationships. Sales via their website focused on their free local delivery service.

From \$10,000 annually to \$117,000 in 2014 in less than two years of operation! In 2013, after seven months of operation in their coffeehouse location, sales topped \$58,000 and in 2014, sales grew 100% to \$117,000.

### *Employee Training*

All this business takes employees, which is Reagan's bailiwick. Coffeehouse operations currently require 120 barista hours a week. New employee training is an intensive month long process to ensure consistency in product and exemplary service. Reagan has written a three-level training manual that includes detailed daily operations procedures, a primer in customer service and workplace etiquette, and basic coffee science.

Reagan says, “The most challenging part of training is adapting to different learning styles.” Homeschooling their son Mason, now 15 and in 9th grade, has helped Reagan know when to adjust her training style to the individual. She adds, “We recently hired some very hands-on type learners, so I developed a colored drink preparation chart and a game using blocks of the same colors to help them remember the order of drink prep.”

Before serving customers, new employees must achieve full barista status. This involves unaided preparation of 30 key menu items that are personally critiqued by Reagan and Rich. New employees receive pay raises with completion of each level of training and are issued a coveted “Certified Barista” certificate upon completion of the drink test.

Employees are empowered to ensure that the customer is not just satisfied, but excited to come back next time. In the event of a mistake, baristas can hand customers “Oops!” coupons which entitles the customer to a free drink on their return visit.

### *The Customer Experience*

The opening of a coffeehouse in a historic 1880's building would be a noteworthy event most any day in a town the size of Jefferson. It is especially noteworthy when one realizes that the proprietors not only run the coffeehouse but also own the building (a total of 6,000 commercial square feet) and personally reclaimed the space from 120 years of use, much of it as a billiards parlor.

GBC 's interior sports a carefully designed, yet eclectic mix of furnishings and decor - many coming directly from the building's history and the history of Greene County. A preserved section of original wallpaper; coffee-stained barn-board wainscoting; a "book shelf" made of actual Reader's Digest

## Greene Bean Coffee's Bell Tower Blend raises \$250 for Bell Tower

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December 23, 2014

The Bell Tower Foundation got a Christmas present last week when Greene Bean Coffee owner Rich Osborne (right) presented foundation president Carole Custer (left) with a check for \$250.

Osborne created a special "Bell Tower Blend" coffee that is sold at his Jefferson shop and he donates a portion of the sale of each bag to the foundation. Osborne says the blend is popular, especially with Greene Countians who like to send presents to families and friends and promote local products at the same time. Custer said the money will be used to enhance the tower and its music.

swim meets and makes time for legos, craft projects, trips to Disney World and continuing building research.

Rich roasts the beans, takes his turn on the bar making drinks and spends 40 hours a week, "on-call" as a storage expert for Oracle. He spends his off hours planning the remodel of the second story of the building.

Rich and Reagan are quite a team - with creative energy, business sense and plain old-fashioned "Mayberry-ness" of their own, you couldn't find a finer example of entrepreneurship!!

condensed books; the original plank wood flooring; all designed, crafted and installed either by the owners or under their watchful eye. For all its nods to history, state of the art technology is on full display in the Brasilia Excelsior Espresso Machine and Akaneks coffee roaster. All elements combine to create a "third-place" that invites customers to come enjoy the views of Bell Tower Square.

And come they do! Customers flock to enjoy coffee while they work, play or "just hang out". The "Window Coffee Ladies" enjoy news and views of the Square with their daily coffee. Central Christian Church holds a weekly bible study in the "living room" area. Columnist Chuck Offenburger has "office hours" each Wednesday, while he drinks coffee, accesses the free wi-fi and writes.

### *Community Connections*

Greene Bean Coffee is known for unique drinks and their signature blends. Roasting is a science and an art. Many of the drinks include fresh ingredients locally sourced from other local entrepreneurs whose products are also for sale at the coffeehouse: honey from Bee Mindful; jellies & jams and syrups from John's 15 Vineyard; apple cider from Deal's Orchard; and cream and milk from Picket Fence Creamery. Candy from Chocolate Storybook in West Des Moines.

Community cooperation, giving tours, talks and providing a place for sales of girl scout cookies AND the game night all add to the ambiance. Reagan's collection of board games were first used on Saturday Game Nights. Now everything from Connect Four to cribbage can be seen on tables throughout the week.

Then there's Tinkerbell, a small fairy figurine that "hides" throughout the coffeehouse. Kids are encouraged to discover her hiding place and given a special sticker when they've found it. Hunting for Tinkerbell keeps the kids occupied while the parents enjoy their drinks. It's an adult place where kids can have fun too. And it encourages the kids to bring their parents in to get a coffee.

A "Tip Poll" each day keeps things interesting and allows customers to "vote with their tips." It makes the slightly uncomfortable subject of gratuity easier to talk about and encourages fun interaction between the staff and customers. A poll last week was "The Who" vs "The Rolling Stones" (The Who won).

### *Rich and Reagan*

Their combined skill sets include computer networking geek, architectural design research, a penchant for documentation and history. Besides homeschooling Mason, Reagan cheers him on at his