

2009 Emerging Business of the Year



Flint Hills Laser Expressions

Owner	Rick and Rhonda Robidou
Nature of Business	Custom engraving and screen printing
City	Emporia
County	Lyon
Phone	620-342-2822
Web Site	www.flinthillslaserexpressions.com
Business Structure	LLC
Business Began	2007
Employees	5
KSBDc Consultant	Lisa Brumbaugh



“Lisa Brumbaugh and the SBDC were instrumental in helping us get our business started. They were easy to work with and the information and assistance was incredible.”

Rick Robidou, Co-owner



Rick and Rhonda moved their business to Emporia in July 2009.

Emporia State University Kansas Small Business Development Center

1200 Commercial Street
Cremer Hall, Room 130
Campus Box 1046
Emporia, Kansas 66801
Phone (620) 341-5308
www.emporia.edu/sbdc

Flint Hills Laser Expressions was originally located in a peaceful setting east of Americus, Kansas. Rick Robidou and his wife, Rhonda have their residence on the same property, so it was a short commute to work each day until they decided to take a giant step forward. In the spring of 2009, a local sporting goods store decided to sell and approached FHLE about buying out their line of apparel and screen printing business and taking over the building located in downtown Emporia. They did just that, and moved Flint Hills Laser Expressions to town in early July.

Rick has a sales and manufacturing background and was employed by Lenze Corporation in Emporia before it decided to cease operations there in 2007. Rhonda is employed full-time with Kansas Gas Service, and helps with the business evenings and weekends. Both daughters, Kari and Kristy help with the business as well. Son-in-laws, Chris and Craig, and Rick's father, Frank also contribute time and talent.

In late 2006 when Rick learned his job would be ending he was faced with a decision about his career opportunities and it became clear to him that being in business for himself was what he wanted to pursue. Rick is a very diligent person who gains a thorough knowledge of everything that he faces. In his efforts to get prepared for business ownership, he enrolled in a series of sessions for people wanting to start their own businesses. The class was a joint effort between the ESU KSBDc, Flint Hills Technical College, and Emporia Main Street, spanning over a period of eight weeks. It was through this that he generated his business plan and became a client of the KSBDc. As the class progressed, Rick worked with the KSBDc on his financial projections and additional planning. Simultaneously, he was remodeling his shop to get ready to house his engraving business and getting trained on the laser engraving equipment. FHLE continued to work with the KSBDc through the expansion and move of the business.

Flint Hills Laser Expressions has made some changes in its target market since the start up of the business, by broadening its offerings to include not only photos and memorials engraved in marble, but also items engraved in wood, brass, mirrors, and glassware. Beginning in 2008, FHLE introduced the first year of an annual collectible series of Christmas ornaments. Now, as a result of their expansion, they also produce and sell a multitude of screen printed items. In addition to participation in trade shows, FHLE and the wide range of high quality products they produce can be found at www.flinthillslaserexpressions.com, and at their storefront at 912 Commercial Street in Emporia, Kansas.

Secret to Success

“Our secret to success is hard work and dedication to quality.”