

Real Deals off the beaten path

Natives bring home decor store to Elko

March 24, 2012 Andrea Glover, *Elko Daily Free Press*

ELKO — It appears to be the very opposite of a good business plan: Hide your store amidst warehouses, and only open it two days a week.

But for the mom-and-pop franchise Real Deals on Home Decor, it's the key to success.

Now ready to open in Elko, Real Deals aims to offer residents a warehouse full of merchandise dedicated to home decor deals.

The store is the project of Stacy Rogers and Rikki Boyle, a pair of Spring Creek natives who graduated from Spring Creek High School in 2000, and have been friends since eighth grade.

Last fall, Boyle began looking into the possibility of opening a store in Elko. At the same time, Rogers was moving back from Twin Falls, where she had gone shopping at the original Real Deals store "almost weekly."

"One night we just decided we wanted to open it, and the very next day we were in touch with the franchise owners," said Rogers.

The pair began the process in late October, and haven't stopped since.

The Elko store is only the second in Nevada — the other is located in Reno. According to Rogers and Boyle, the franchise had long been looking to open a store in Elko. Due to high numbers of Elko residents visiting the store in Twin Falls, the franchise became aware of Elko as a potential market, unhampered by the economy.

While others had tried to bring Real Deals to the area, Boyle and Rogers succeeded — thanks, in part, to the financial backing of Rogers' parents, Paula and Blaine Nichols.

"Thanks to them we're able to do this," said Rogers.

After securing a store with the franchise, the pair found a roughly 2,000 square foot space in a warehouse behind Elko Auto Body, 856 Industrial Way. After dedicating 1,500 square feet of the building to be used to display merchandise, the pair started filling it with crates of boxes.

As the store is only open two days a week, it isn't the type of business that would do well on a storefront, Rogers said, as she explained the reasoning behind locating in an industrial area. Being in



an out-of-the-way spot keeps overhead low and prices affordable, while being open only two days makes shopping an occasion.

“It creates a sense of excitement,” Rogers said. “If you find something, you’d better buy it then because it won’t be there the next week.”

Items are unique to the store, and the store generally receives less than six of each item — helping to keep decor distinct throughout different houses.

The pair receives merchandise from 15 vendors, representing a broad range of home decor.

“When you walk in the store, you want a variety because you want to reach all customers,” Boyle said.

Throughout the store, six islands are set up to display merchandise. Each side of an island features different sets and color schemes, for a total of 12 rotating displays.

Some islands may feature a shabby chic or modern theme, while others are created around seasonal and holiday themes.

“It’s actually decorated like how people would want to decorate their house,” said Rogers. “You try to give different options because somebody might not decorate their house in those same colors.”

And with the store only open two days a week, the displays constantly offer something new.

“There’s a new look every week,” said Boyle. “So that way the customers come in and they want to come back in the next week” to see what’s new.

With each having broadly different tastes, Boyle and Rogers said they help balance the store with their interests in different styles and fashions.

“Some women like the country, and they’ll tend to gravitate towards that country section while I’m more (drawn) to the sharp colors and lines,” said Rogers, who said she is confident customers will find something that appeals to them.

A key detail of the franchise is offering home decor at warehouse prices, and as such, most items range between \$1 and \$30.

Oversized wall clocks and mirrors both come in at around \$30, while other larger items, such as furniture or gallery art, retail slightly higher.

Prices are kept low so “people want to change up their home decor all the time — instead of once every five years,” said Boyle.



During the grand opening, prices on select merchandise will be even lower.

Opening at 10 a.m. April 5 and April 7, each day the first 25 customers through the doors will receive gift cards. While shopping the sales — all 100-hour soy candles are priced at \$3.99 and 36-inch metal sunflowers at \$4.99 — customers can snack on cookies and coffee.

As the year progresses, the pair will also offer seasonal merchandise. They have plans to host special events, such as ladies' night out or a fundraiser, both of which would allow the store to open for an extra evening, as well.