

Dollar Discount Store

Being a woman in business was one of the largest obstacles Susan Lankford and her mother, Bernice Balog, had to overcome four years ago when they opened the Dollar Discount in downtown Thermopolis. At first it was quite difficult for Susan and Bernice to get a bank to consider making them a loan, neither had any experience in the business lending process. Then they talked to Dwane Heintz at the Wyoming Small Business Development Center who made a trip to their town and ran figures for them. At that time, they realized the Dollar Discount could happen. They visited later with Connie Clark at the American National Bank who helped them process a Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) loan, when they refinanced and opened their second store in Worland.



Susan said “Both mother and I love what we do with all our heart and spirit”. When they first opened their store, Susan said they marketed like Saks 5th Ave., by buying out other dollar stores. They were very discriminating in their buying and their customers knew they were getting their value. They also looked at other small businesses and weighed their strengths and weaknesses, then applied this to their business. When a customer

comes through their door, someone in the store will always greet them. If a customer gets tired from shopping, they offer them a chair to relax for awhile. Susan says their help are like family to them and without them it just wouldn't be the same store. At first, they had a hard time finding reliable help, but they ended up with the greatest. Their store manager, Rick Ridenour, is very knowledgeable when it comes to managing the store and Susan and Bernice rely on him. Together Susan and Bernice have owned the El Rancho Motel for the last three and one-half years.

Susan attended the University of Wyoming where she received her BA in education. She is now retired from teaching after 21 years. Bernice has tried to retire but it just doesn't happen. She is now semi-retired, but helps with the store and motel. They are members of the Thermopolis Chamber, church worship leaders, sing in the choir and have taught Bible school. Both feel they are filling a need in the community and are looking for additional needs to help fill, to make their store a destination point.



When traveling through Thermopolis Susan and Bernice would like you to stop in to the store, now named \$1 and More, at 541 Broadway and see what treasures you can find.