

# Celebrating Success

COCC's Small Business Development Center 541-383-7290

## Tula Gluten Free Baking Co.

Caleb and Mieke Johnson

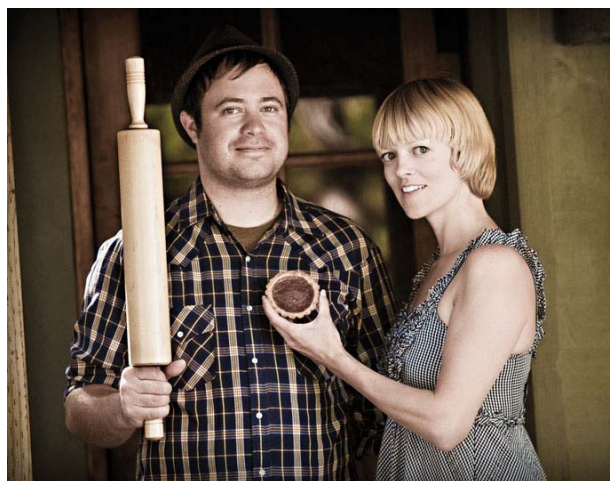
(541) 306-1250

<http://www.tulabaking.com/>

Employees: 2 full-time

When Bend residents Caleb and Mieke Johnson perceived a need for a gluten free bakery in Central Oregon, they knew that the first step was to get some outside help in understanding how to make a business work. Upon a recommendation from a friend they contacted the Small Business Development Center at COCC and signed up for the next *How to Start a Business* class. As this class was about to start, Mieke noticed the bio of the instructor, Maureen Quinn. Maureen had run a successful retail and wholesale bakery for years. When the time came to introduce themselves and explain why they were there, Mieke said, 'I'm here to meet Maureen'. Thus began a productive relationship between advisor and aspiring small businessperson.

The next course to be offered by the Small Business Development Center was the *Launch Your Business* series. These three classes walk through the process of writing a business plan, marketing to customers and understanding the importance of cash flow, among other things. According to Mieke, 'Being in the class with other new aspiring business people made for interchange of encouragement, trials and ideas.' Mieke has also attended classes on *Marketing with Facebook & Twitter*, *SBA Loan Programs* and *Search Engine Optimization*. 'Each course felt comprehensive and delivered great value and knowledge,' she says.



## Partnership with the SBDC

According to the Johnsons, 'The Small Business Development Center has been an invaluable resource in helping us develop a thriving small business. The perspective and advice of the advisors provided focus during the hectic first year of business.' The bakery started as a wholesale business offering a full line of allergy sensitive baked goods to local cafes and coffee shops. They are currently making plans to open a dedicated gluten free cafe.



With help from the Small Business Administration and the Oregon Business Development Department, the Small Business Development Center offers advising and workshops to new and existing businesses.