

# Celebrating Success

COCC's Business Development Center 383-7290

## Wahoo Films

**Michelle Alvarado**  
152 NW Colorado Avenue #2  
Bend OR 97701  
(541) 585-3456  
www.wahoofilms.com

**Employees: 2 full-time**  
plus 2 interns & freelance as needed



Michelle Alvarado started Wahoo Films four years ago, while working full-time running a high school film department. Since then, she's built Wahoo into a cutting-edge video production company.

Following its motto, "Telling stories for companies, customers and communities," Wahoo Films currently provides five different services: Online & DVD promotional videos; TV commercials; live online video for events, conventions & training sessions; Webspots; and an online video newsletter.

Wahoo's latest addition to its services—live online video—integrates music, broadcast and video, with DVD-quality production. Clients now have the ability to hold a live, interactive training session or conference online with anyone in the world.

Michelle graduated from USC majoring in Cinema and TV production. She went on to work for National Geographic in feature films, Monterey Bay Aquarium, and freelanced as an award-winning underwater cinematographer. She then became a high school video production educator.

Michelle says her current success is due to having turned her documentary experience into an effective business marketing tool, creating what she dubs "documericals."

## Partnership with the SBDC

All of this became possible through Michelle's relationship with COCC's Small Business Development Center. When Michelle saw the business opportunity in online video, she decided to take a course offered at the SBDC. The class painted a clear picture of the difference between being just a technician and really running a business. She met with an advisor monthly to create a marketing/business plan and was also teamed with a second advisor to learn how to make and close a sale and market herself affordably. Michelle believes that the SBDC has been invaluable in giving her encouragement mixed with a healthy dose of reality.

Michelle describes her greatest challenge as acquiring the confidence to take the leaps necessary to grow. After a client in the advertising business recently credited Wahoo Films with helping her company to procure a \$1,500,000 contract, Michelle knew she had met that challenge.



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