



How West Peace Road was Won: The Eggsclusive Café Success Story

Being inside of Eggsclusive Café after driving through cornfields on the northern end of DeKalb County feels like a waking dream of sorts. Like an oasis, the first steps you take into the Sycamore Restaurant are an adventure into a lush, almost tropical environment. Classical guitar fills a room that is loaded with colors of green and orange, and is almost always bathed in sunlight. The food is innovative and classic simultaneously, offering new spins on skilletts, omelets, wraps, and other breakfast and lunch favorites.

I recently spent time with Alex Henigan, a Sycamore native and part owner of the Eggsclusive Café (along with his good friend Peter Spyrtos). Within minutes, it became clear to me that Eggsclusive is so unique because of the creativity and do-it-yourself attitude of its ownership.

Alex and Peter, both young men in their twenties, attended Sycamore schools and have been friends since Peter emigrated from Greece at the age of 5. They have both lived in DeKalb County since that time. The idea of Eggsclusive Café was hatched when they both visited a resort in Mexico and found an inspirational breakfast experience similar to the one they now offer at Eggsclusive. The music played in Eggsclusive today is the same soundtrack that had been spinning at the resort.

When interviewing Alex Henigan, it became clear to me that Eggsclusive's unique success was a direct byproduct of innovation and the confidence to learn new things. For example, the floors in Eggsclusive were tiled by Alex and Peter themselves (who had absolutely no experience with laying floors before). The restaurant was painted by the owners own hands as well. "You have to put 80% in yourself. I always try to sacrifice energy to save money," Henigan stated. Management's willingness to try new things themselves significantly contributed to a healthy bottom line and an innately creative business venture.

The second apparent positive quality that has contributed to Eggsclusive's survival despite opening in a recession (August 28, 2008) is the people first philosophy that comes with a hometown small business. The location itself was chosen largely due to Alex and Peter's lifelong connection with the people of DeKalb County. Quality customer service in the front of the house and highly personalized dialogue are characteristic of a visit to Eggsclusive. Internally, Henigan said that maintaining organizational trust and friendship are very important to him. This also shows in the customer service.

Eggsclusive Café is standing proof that with enough vision and do-it-yourself attitude, opening a small business even in the depths of a negative economic climate is entirely possible. In DeKalb County, providing for yourself and others as an entrepreneur is completely achievable with proper creativity and work ethic.

--Julian Magdaleno
DeKalb County Board Office