

Desperate Times Brewery
1201 Carlisle Springs Rd
Carlisle, PA 17013
Cumberland County

desperatetimesbrewery.com

Industries: Craft Beer ,
Brewpub

Founded: 2016

SBDC Assistance:
Business Planning, Start-Up,
Marketing, Financing and
Market Research.

*“Our Business Consultant
was just amazing! She was
there to assist us and
provide support
throughout the process.”*

- Susan and Matt Dunn



**DESPERATE
TIMES**
Brewery

Shippensburg University SBDC
405 Grove Hall
1871 Old Main Drive
Shippensburg, PA 17257
P (717) 477-1935
F (717) 477-4010
sbdc@ship.edu
www.ship.edu/sbdc

Good Times Ahead for Desperate Times

Matt and Susan Dunn traveled an unplanned route from Florida to Arkansas to Carlisle, Pennsylvania and their current enterprise, Desperate Times Brewery. The brewery's website may induce one to think the name came directly from the Prohibition era scenes depicted there, but it was their own "desperate times" with unexpected career changes, geographic relocations and a growing family to support that led to six years of contemplating and planning for the launch of one of Carlisle's new breweries.



Matt, a civil engineer with a background in residential development and airport design, and Susan, a career flight attendant, met in early 2008 and married that summer. Shortly thereafter, and unexpectedly, Matt's career took them to Little Rock for a brief stint before being transferred to Carlisle. One of Susan's friends owned a brewery and the vision of owning a brewery someday began percolating in their minds. Like many

brewers, they began their path towards Desperate Times by experimenting with home brewing while in Arkansas.

To hone his brewing knowledge and skills, Matt enrolled in, and completed, the "Start your own Brewery" course offered by the Siebel Institute in Chicago, IL. He then completed the American Brewer's Guild 23-week "Intensive Brewing Science & Engineering" program in Middlebury, VT. Planning and launching the business came next.

The local economic development corporation referred the Dunns to the SBDC for assistance with refining their business plan, assisting with market research and financial projections. They note how appreciative they are for their SBDC Consultant, Robin Burtner, "she was always checking in, providing information and feedback through the planning process."

Finding a location was one of the challenges they faced. Ultimately, they secured a special exception with zoning ordinances since no brew pub ordinances existed in Carlisle. Like many entrepreneurs, perhaps the hardest challenge they faced was securing financing. They were rejected by seven or eight banks before finding one favorably disposed to support their start-up.

Robin took advantage of a relationship with Dickinson College to engage the Dunns with a group of intelligent and creative business students who focused on developing additional marketing ideas to promote their new business. Desperate Times is off to a good start and is a positive addition in Carlisle. The Dunns have employed nearly twenty people and developed a loyal and growing following. Business is ahead of their original expectations, with on-site sales, bottle and growler sales and several local restaurants now carrying their products as well.

If all continues to go well, Desperate Times is set for good times ahead.

