



Success Stories...

Goldsmith Discovers New Avenue for Sharing Work Thanks to Fast Forward New Mexico Classes

By Debra Mayeux

AZTEC – A goal of the Fast Forward New Mexico program is to bring awareness to the benefits of broadband Internet access to those in rural communities and to increase their Internet proficiency skills through training classes.

The October and November 2010 training sessions at the Aztec Public Library met that goal by training residents from far-reaching areas of San Juan County in how to use the Internet for both personal and entrepreneurial benefits.

Tiki Carpenter is one of those people. Living atop a bluff near the New Mexico-Colorado border, Tiki only recently received access to high-speed Internet in her home. Prior to the upgrade, she struggled with dial-up Internet, finding it difficult to promote her business and communicate with friends and family by e-mail. When she learned about Fast Forward training, Tiki knew she would benefit by learning new computer skills.

Tiki is a metal smith. She grew up amongst the Colorado mining community and developed a lifelong passion for gold and silver. It was natural for her to want to work with the metals she found while mining and panning for gold. She became licensed as both a goldsmith and silversmith. She repairs heirloom jewelry and creates her designs. "Where I shine is in custom work. With a custom piece you're making a very special item with a very special purpose," Tiki said. "The pieces I do end up becoming family treasures or family heirlooms."

Tiki also does a lot of repairs. "Repairing is like bringing back an old friend," she said. Her business, Goldcrafters, has a presence in a small storefront in Durango, Colorado, as well as a website on the Internet.

While Tiki's website has existed for quite some time, it wasn't getting the attention that would lead to business growth. She decided to participate in the free training that covered everything from Internet marketing to using social media to promote a business. The classes inspired Tiki to look at updating her website and further developing an Internet market for her jewelry and gold and silver repair services. "I looked at Fast Forward and knew it was a tool I needed to start learning the Internet, because once you learn how to use it you can reach out there to the whole world," she said. Tiki plans to use such sites as Facebook and LinkedIn to further promote Goldcrafters and possibly lead clients to her website.

"Things are changing," Tiki said. "I needed to learn about social media, evaluate and see if these are tools I want to use." The classes helped her determine that a new website and participation on the Internet will help boost her business. "The instructors were awesome as presenters. They could not have been better," Tiki said. "I realized I can take my work and put it out to the world."

For more information about Tiki Carpenter and her work visit www.goldsmithtiki.com/wordpress