

2008 Emerging Business of the Year

Longford Water Company, LLC



Owner/Managers	Kim and Wava Kramer
Nature of Business	Bottled Water
City	Longford
County	Clay
Phone	785-388-2233
Business Structure	Limited Liability Corporation
Business Began	2005
Employees	7
KSBDc Consultant	Linda Sutton



www.longfordwater.com

“After Linda Sutton at the KSBDC provided market research and demographics, we decided to proceed but knew we needed a business plan. I contacted Linda, attended a KSBDC workshop, and learned the basics of building a business plan.”

Wava Kramer, President

For decades Longford, Kansas, population 84, has been known for its naturally sweet, soft water. Many people would visit Longford and say, “You should bottle and sell this water.” This sparked an idea by some local people to research the idea of bottling and selling the water. Groundwater from Longford is filtered by a distinctive group of underground rocks known as the Kiowa Formation. Thus, the water is bottled and marketed as Kiowata. Road signs near the community advise, “For Good Health and Longevity Drink Longford Water, Kansas’ Purest.”

In 2004, a group requested assistance from Linda Sutton at the KSBDC for market research on the idea. Once the feasibility of the business was determined, a business plan was created. Twenty-five investors formed Longford Water Company, LLC and financed the entire project through local private funds. An LLC was chosen so community investors could get involved and support the project. Kim and Wava Kramer, husband and wife team, manage the business which began operation in May 2005.

The business has grown as it found a niche in private labeling for schools, churches, events and businesses primarily in Kansas. The company works to design a color label with private logo, slogan, name, and other information for each customer that is adhered to the bottle after it is filled.

Secret to Success

“A secret to success is to start small. You can always grow. We wanted to make sure there was a market for bottled water before we invested a lot of money.”

— Wava Kramer, President

Wava Kramer stated, “Success is the best part of having your own business, in a nutshell. Knowing that you started with nothing, and with the financial help and confidence of the investors, you are now operating a business of which to be proud.”

Following Hurricane Katrina, Longford Water Company sent a semi load of water for relief efforts. Longford community members donated money and labor to send water to the devastated areas. TSI Trucking from nearby Clay Center, Kansas donated the original shipment’s freight.

The Longford Water Company just expanded its 3-year-old business with the addition of Bottle Blow Molding Equipment. The equipment was needed to lower the cost of each bottle and requires less storage room, thus saving money on any immediate building expansion.

According to Wava, “With the expected savings by producing our own blown bottles, we are hopeful that this will make us more competitive with other larger private bottled water producers.” With increased orders it is anticipated Longford Water Company will recognize the need for a larger volume bottling line as well as the need for more employees.



Twenty-five investors formed Longford Water Company in 2005.

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