

# BAR-U-EAT



SAM & JASON IN ICELAND



## EQUIPMENT

*STEAMBOAT SPRINGS - NLF provides much needed equipment for fast growing business.*

It all started in Sam Nelson's kitchen. He was craving a good tasting, organic energy bar to fuel his outdoor activities – the kind he'd had while working as a guide in the Fjords of Iceland. Nothing commercially available at the time could quite measure up. He just started experimenting. He said, "I finally got it right. I shared the bars with my friends and people started wanting to buy them." One of those friends, Jason Friday, convinced him to get serious and turn it into a business. And that's what happened. Sam and Jason started producing and selling Sam's creation.

The first retail sales of BAR-U-EAT was in January of 2020. At that time, they had no interest in getting money for more production, they were profitable and growing, but at a certain point they realized demand was picking up and there was opportunity to grow the business immediately. They looked at all their options and came to terms with the fact that they'd need money to grow. They could no longer fund out of their own pockets – "we were paying ourselves below minimum wage and it was really not sustainable". And they were at max production.

Realizing they would need

additional capital for production to get into additional stores, the pair looked to the SBA for loan assistance and at traditional banks – but because they had under 2 years of sales – even with being in over 120 retail accounts – it just was not enough for conventional loans. Sam connected with OEDIT and received a grant from the Rural Jumpstart program and Jason met with Anita Cameron with the Northwest Loan Fund. She immediately saw the opportunity and worked with them on a loan to help purchase additional equipment.

While still not fully capitalized they have a solid business plan that has enabled them to interest investors.

When asked why the NLF loan was important to the business, Sam answered, "Equipment – we needed equipment before we could have the conversation with investors – the loan from NLF helped us clear the biggest hurdle - - since we were at max production. With new equipment, over time, we can make 35 to 45 times more bars per year than we can now."

The partners appreciate being able to operate their business in Steamboat. Sam remarked, "It's inspirational being among entrepreneurs who will freely give advice. Making our products here locally is just really affirming."

