Jason Nitschke
Regional Director
Rich Gannon
Rural Business Advisor
Jake Clark
COVID Specialist/ Business Advisor

Great Falls Regional SBDC

Turbo Transportation Group, LLC

Great Falls, MT



"The SBDC gave us great advice and excellent recommendations on our project and plan. Their assistance with research helped us back up our financial projections which was invaluable."

-Curt Runia, *Owner*

Curtis Runia and Aaron Corbett began their partnership, Turbo Transportation Group, in 2010 after extensive careers in the trucking industry and corporate America, including Fortune 500 experience. Turbo and its affiliate entities broker cars and trucks across the US-Canada border. Revenue quickly grew and the partners began recognizing multiple opportunities in their industry.

By late 2019, while managing efficiencies in their operation, they purchased land along Interstate 15 in Great Falls, MT. The company had the vision to expand its footprint, take advantage of voids in the transportation industry, and relocate the corporate office. The project, however, stalled as it faced financing delays. In light of those delays, Curt and Aaron turned to Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for assistance. With the assistance of SBDC Regional Director Jason Nitschke and SBDC Business Advisor Rich Gannon, the large, multi-phased project was scaled back to make it more palatable to lending partners.

The first phase became a commercial truck and recreational vehicle wash. The plan for the expansion was to create Big Iron Truck and RV Wash, a full-service operation with two, 120 foot long bays, one providing a professional hand wash, and a second bay equipped with an automated gantry wash system. This system will be the first of its kind in Montana. The multi-million dollar project required extensive business and financial planning, market research, and loan packaging.

With a high-quality, bank-ready plan in place, the partners approach multiple commercial lenders, including High Plains Financial, an SBA 504 lender. In short order, a commercial bank approved the loan followed by local committee approval from High Plains Financial on the SBA 504 participation. But upon submission of the loan package to the SBA for agency approval, the 504 request was denied.

By now material costs had increased the project expense by 20%, to $4.8 million. Jason and Rich stepped back in to help gather updated information and construct a reconsideration submission. This time the 504 application was approved. During the resubmission process, another lender showed interest in the project and tendered a formal financing offer. With additional analysis, the partners evaluated the merits of each offer, determining the second would save them nearly $400,000 in interest expense over the life of the loan.

In total, Turbo Transportation Group received over 90 hours of assistance from the Great Falls SBDC and, as of December 2021, has closed on its loan and started construction. The facility expects to be open in Spring 2022. Eight to 10 jobs will be created. The previously undeveloped land on the west side of Great Falls has been annexed into the city, increasing its taxable value and giving the business access to city water and sewer. The business also will attract out-of-market sales from regional and international trucking companies.