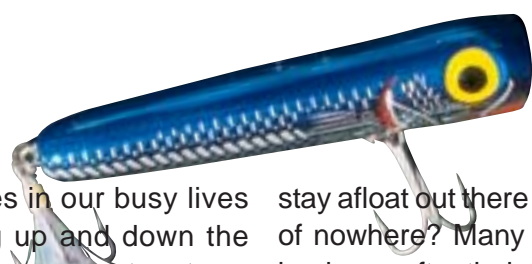


TEXOMA TACKLE & CONVENIENCE STORE



By Steve Burge

Often times in our busy lives while driving up and down the rural roads we encounter struggles of life and death. Now, I'm not talking about the road kills. I'm talking about the many bait and tackle stores that we pass going to and from our favorite fishing hole or our secret hunting spot.

Have you ever wondered how some of these rural businesses

stay afloat out there in the middle of nowhere? Many don't stay in business after their first year and close the doors for good. But, the ones that stay open have what it takes to make it work, and that is true business grit.

Just like the early settlers that first forged their way into Oklahoma, rural business owners have had many obstacles to overcome too. The first is to find a good loca-

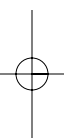
tion in which to "settle" on to establish a business that will be easily accessible for their new customers. Just like picking a spot to hang a deer stand or cast a lure, location is an important factor for success. In fact, it can make or break a business before it even gets started.

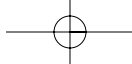
Some of you may have stopped in the Texoma Tackle and Convenience Store, which is east of Kingston on Highway 70, on your



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When hunters and anglers go on trips they purchase more than just fishing lures and bullets. They buy snacks, drinks, ice, gasoline and much more. These purchases are often an important part of rural economies.





way to Texoma Lake, but I bet you did not know the history of the store.

The store opened its glass doors in May 2000 after Conoco completed a feasibility study and a 20-year study of daily living in the Texoma area was completed by one man – David Wilson. Wilson's passion is hunting and fishing. In fact, he moved his family from Laverne (in far northwest Oklahoma) 20 years ago to hunt and fish. Now that may sound a bit selfish, but just like the early settlers David was looking for a better way of life for his family. Hunting is good in Laverne, but fishing? Hey, you've got to give the fishing edge to Texoma.

Texoma Lake is a multi-million-dollar contributor to the state's economy, and David wanted to be a part of it. So while working at the Texoma Lake lodge in the maintenance department and also doing some fishing guide work on the lake too, David was planning to own his own business. He saved some money and after some research, purchased land for his future store. A new adventure began for the Wilson settlers!

For the last four years, David has started his day at 3:30 a.m. to unlock the doors by 5 a.m. and closed them at 10 p.m., 7 days a week. The store has only been closed two days out of the four years of being in business, once for a funeral, and the other for one of their daughter's graduation.

I must tell you this, it is true, behind every good man there is a really good woman. David's wife and mother to his three children, has got to be a number one example of a really good woman.

Her name is Tammy.

When David is not at the store, Tammy is.

"Running this store is our life and everything we do revolves around this store," Tammy said. "We have put one of our daugh-



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Tammy Wilson and her cat Shelby can be found at the Texoma Tackle and Convenience Store just about any time the doors are open. You may have to buy the fishing lures, but the fishing advice is free.



Texoma Tackle & Convenience Store

(580) 564-1835

Located 1 mile west of Lake Texoma State Park on Highway 70.

ters through college and we currently have a daughter and a son attending college. This store is our life."

The busiest times of the year are the summer months with all the fishing tournaments and tourists.

"We get swamped during the summer, and all the holidays we get a lot of business too," Tammy added.

When asked what she believed were some of the key factors in staying in business, she said without hesitating, "first would be perseverance. Next, be dependable every day and have what your customers want by being willing to be diversified.

"A lot of our customers come from Oklahoma City and Dallas, and we have made a lot of good friends with our faithful customers by providing a dependable business with a personal touch. Seventy-five percent of our customers buy fishing tackle, food, and beverages when they purchase a hunting or fishing license. The advice on where and when to fish is free!"

Tammy shared with me some of the other obstacles that small rural business owner's face. She said there are permits and licenses for everything, from city to county to state. Insurance and workers compensation are a must not to mention all the tax paperwork that must be carefully completed.

I nearly forgot to mention their cat Shelby. Shelby has got to be one of the largest cats I have ever seen that could still walk. If you don't need fishing supplies, food or something to drink just drop in to see Shelby, but be sure and say "Howdy" to David or Tammy because they will be there to help you have an enjoyable outing on Texoma Lake.