

Taking Care of Business

*Couple's ventures
have made
a big impact
in the Glenwood
community*

By Jeanie Senior

Not surprisingly, Glenwood today is a different place than it was 40 years ago, when Jerry and Louise Lorenz moved to the small community at the base of Mount Adams.

They were recent graduates of the University of Idaho. Jerry, with a degree in forestry and business, had his first job, working for St. Regis Paper Co.

In the years since, they have raised three children, seen the area timber industry decline and watched Glenwood change.

Some of those changes relate directly to Jerry and Louise, who met and married when they were college students.

Jerry grew up in the small town of Mullan, in Idaho's Silver Valley. Louise grew up on a dairy farm in Meridian, Idaho.

Now, they own a cluster of businesses in Glenwood, an enterprise that got its start in 1982 when, as Jerry says, "we bought this old gas station."

There is an eight-unit motel, the Shade Tree Inn; a convenience store and video rental; the gas station, which includes a cardlock; three

full-hookup recreational vehicle sites; a laundromat; and a restaurant, famed for Louise's cooking, particularly her pies.

Jerry has endless praise for Louise, his partner in all of their ventures.

"The one person who's made this thing go is my wife," he says.

They have built up their businesses over the years, responding to demand in the area. At least a couple of times, they mortgaged their home—the old Conboy house, north of the restaurant and gas station and west of the motel—to pay for an expansion.

They opened the motel and built a new gas station in 1991.

"To be successful we had to become somewhat of a destination," Jerry says.

In the mid-1980s, Jerry left St. Regis, which had been sold to Champion. By then, he said the pending shift in Glenwood's job base was apparent, caused in part by the increasing mechanization of logging.

"A lot of people really didn't understand what was coming," he says, listing several factors in the decline, from a softening export market to Canadian competition.

Jerry estimates Glenwood eventually lost 75 percent of its logging jobs.

The old gas station, built in 1940, initially was both a service station and a car dealership. The car sales business was truncated by the start of World War II.

"The owner sold one Plymouth coupe out of this room, then he didn't get any more (cars), so he didn't stay in the car dealer business very long," Jerry says.

The present restaurant occupies the space that once was the display room for new automobiles. What was once the lubrication rack is now the restaurant kitchen.

A couple of other restaurants



Top, Jerry Lorenz signs for a delivery. Above, the Shade Tree Inn, one of several Glenwood businesses owned and operated through the years by Jerry and Louise.



Left, Louise and Jerry plan to sell their businesses as they look toward retirement. Below, pies are Louise's specialty at their restaurant.

came and left the area, including one called Parsons Good Eats.

Louise, with a degree in home economics and experience with a wedding cake business, was persuaded to open a new restaurant.

Eventually, Jerry says they added the convenience store due to popular demand. They renovated the restaurant, adding tractor seats at the counter, and the trunk of an oak tree at the center of the room. Bedecked with a mounted deer's head, it's there to support a ceiling beam, but also adds interest to the room.

Jerry says Glenwood offers a host of attractions to a variety of people, starting with the beautiful scenery. The motel's guests include mountain climbers, birdwatchers, hunters, snowmobilers, wildflower enthusiasts, loggers and geologists.

The Shade Tree Inn's Web site reflects Jerry's view of the area's offerings.

"You'll enjoy the natural beauty of wildflowers at Bird Creek Meadows in the summer," it says. "Mother Nature's stunning display of fall colors will take your breath away. There is a constant snowpack



for winter outings such as snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and snow shoeing.

"Spring arrives gently with the sounds of many varieties of birds and a melting snowpack winding its way down streams, rivers, and creeks running cold and swift. The air is crisp and clean.

"The Mt. Adams community is by far some of the friendliest, kindest people you will chance to meet in Washington, and they welcome you to the great outdoors."

Jerry says the autumn hunting season is the motel's busiest time, but snowmobilers keep the rooms rented through the winter. One summer guest likes Glenwood so much she repeatedly books an extended summer stay.

Jerry can draw on his familiarity with the region to offer information to visitors.

"Tell me what you want to see, and I can probably tell you where to go," he says.

Two of the Lorenz children still live in Klickitat County. Jerry and Louise's daughter, Jenny, her husband, Sam Wilkins, and their three children live in Glenwood; Lori and her husband, Don Smith, and their two children live in Lyle. Son Bill lives in Ellensburg.

Jerry and Louise are looking to retire. They bought a house in Dallesport, where they try to spend at least a couple of days a week.

The businesses are for sale.

"We are ready to sell," Jerry says. "We want to travel."

There's another compelling reason: Jerry's mother—a great fan of her daughter-in-law—made her son promise he would get Louise to retire.

"Louise," her husband says fondly, "is the salt of the earth." ■

Visit the Shade Tree Inn Web site at <http://discover-mt-adams.com/index.html>.