

## A SWEET DEAL

According to the Chandler's Sandhill Honey brochure, Pat caught his first beehive in a cardboard box when he was 10 years old and has had an interest in beekeeping ever since. Pat and his brother Mike started raising honey bees in the 90s and Pat assumed the honey business in 2003. Pat and Racheal Chandler were restricted to selling their honey at Farmer's Markets because it wasn't packaged



in a commercial kitchen. This same challenge is faced by beekeepers statewide. With help from an Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Agriculture (VAA) grant, the Chandler's, in partnership with their son, Ben, and Fred and Rose Cram are now the owners of a honey processing and bottling facility in Anselmo. Other Nebraska beekeepers are working with the Chandler facility to process their own honey.

Located along Highway 2 and the Sandhills Journey Byway, the new facility offers locals and tourists a place to purchase honey. Chandlers also feature other selected local products in their store. But, more than just a store, it offers a place to learn about the importance of bees in the environment and see a display of honey bees at work.

The facility has definitely impacted a statewide fundraiser—Honey Sunday, a project of the Arc that assists people with cognitive, intellectual, and development disabilities. Prior to the opening of the Chandler's Sandhills Honey and Bottling Co. honey used for the project was from sources outside the state. The first year, the Chandler operation had to fill 15,745 honey bear bottles to meet the Arc contract. This was a great kick-off event for their new business.

Originally, one full-time employee was planned but the business now has grown to three full-time employees and part-time help.

A uniquely designed window frame inside the store mimics a honeycomb. On the store side the shelves display gift items and collectibles. Through the glass is the bottling room and kitchen. On production days, visitors can watch the process and gain a better understanding of how honey is made available for market.



For more information on this project, contact Pat or Racheal Chandler at [racheal@neb-sandhills.net](mailto:racheal@neb-sandhills.net)

*"This facility is an opportunity for the whole community."*

*Pat Chandler*