



Re OPENED FOR BUSINESS

Comet Cleaners in Eagle Pass had been constructed from the ground up by a local family. When the family was forced to close the business in 2010, the big yellow stucco building stood empty. Lytia Chavez, a mother of four who works a hotel across the street from the cleaners, saw a new possibility for the abandoned building. Chavez had long had an entrepreneurial itch—at one time she had explored opening a beauty salon. When the building and its equipment came up for sale, she and her husband decided that the time was right. “It kind of fell in my lap,” Chavez said. Before making the transition from employee to business owner, she needed some financial assistance. In early 2011, Chavez met Elizabeth Peña, a Business Development Specialist with the Sul Ross Rio Grande College SBDC. Peña helped her develop a business plan with the careful financial projections required to attract a bank loan. “Liz has a lot of knowledge and experience,” Chavez said. “She helped dot the i’s and cross the t’s” of the loan process. The work paid off, and soon the Chavez family owned a Comet Cleaners and Laundry establishment. The Comet franchise counts more than 250 stores in 16 states and assists owners with installation, training and marketing. “Everything was a learning experience,” Chavez said. Comet Cleaners had its grand opening in May 2011. Business is growing steadily, and the hotel, is one of her customers. “I can see incremental growth every week.”

Comet Cleaners

“Liz was always available to help and give me insights, ideas, and tips. I’ve also been to seminars for people who want to open small businesses, and they were excellent.”

— Lytia Chavez

IMPACT

- Business Startup
- Commercial Loan: \$280,000
- Equity Investment: \$70,000
- Jobs Created: 10

SRSU Rio Grande College SBDC

