

This Coin Laundry is a 'Classic'



Patrick and Kathy Minikus say the biggest reward from operating the laundromat is the appreciation shown by their customers and children, like Vernice Dominguez.

At Omaha Classic Coin Laundry, 4107 S. 24th St., co-owners Patrick and Kathy Minikus are often greeted with open arms by customers and their children who fill the facility's play area, complete with toys, a flat-screen TV and collection of more than 200 DVDs.

"We're the most customer-friendly laundromat in the city," Patrick Minikus tells a visitor as he points out the colorful décor and special amenities such as custom-made folding tables, comfortable seating, updated restrooms, infant strollers, extra laundry carts and helpful attendants.

The bilingual attendants are

available to assist customers with the proper use of equipment so their clothes come out cleaner. "We have wonderful attendants who work very hard to keep the laundromat clean," explains President and CFO Kathy Minikus. "You will never come here and find it unattended."

Kathy is proud of the laundromat's spacious 5,000-square-foot interior featuring extra-wide aisles between rows of squeaky clean washing and drying machines. "People tell us how nice it is to be able to get into a dryer without bumping into another customer," she explains. "Most laundromats are cramped and people are on top of each other."

The Minikus were both employed at other jobs when they decided to start a business to supplement their income after retirement. "One of the best things we have going for us is we had no idea what we were doing," Patrick admits. "If we had taken the traditional approach to starting a laundromat, our business would not look the way it does and wouldn't be such a success."

After months of research, meeting with laundry distributors, creating a business plan, finding the right location with a terrific landlord, and upgrading the building's sewer and electric utilities at a cost of \$100,000, Omaha Classic Coin Laundry opened for business in May 2011.

"Two weeks before we opened the doors, people were outside the

building on a daily basis wanting to know when we were going to open," Patrick recalls.

Among the innovations Kathy championed were custom-made tables used to fold clothes. "I found a company that manufactured tables for school science laboratories and asked them to design something for us," she says. "They will maintain their color forever."

Personal touches include holiday and anniversary giveaways, TV monitors that allow parents and attendants to observe children in the play area, a state-of-the-art

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security system, and a bulletin board for posting personal notes and community events.

"When you come in, the whole objective is to have a family atmosphere and a family-type experience," Kathy emphasizes. "We worked really hard to make it comfortable."

The couple credits First National Bank for turning their vision into a reality. "Given our lack of experience in running a brick and mortar business, other banks were not very interested in talking to us," according to Kathy. "First National Bank had faith in us and worked with us through the entire process. You have to find a bank to support you and First National has been awesome."

Patrick adds, "If it weren't for First National, we probably wouldn't be here today."



When she isn't busy helping customers, attendant Massiel Amador can usually be found cleaning the front-loading washers, dryers and folding tables.

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