



We have another Business Spotlight for you that offers a Brewhouse, Golf Course, and an absolutely gorgeous Inn!

Can you tell us about Cliff View Golf Course & Inn and The Brewhouse?

Cliff View Golf Club Inc. is a family-owned business that is nestled on a nearly 140-acre track in the mountains of the Alleghany Highlands of Virginia, and the property boasts nearly a mile of river front along the Jackson River. Cliff View Golf Club Inc. was established by owners Frank E. Jr and Susan Reynolds Sponaugle, both natives of Alleghany County, in July 1996 with the opening of a 9-hole golf course that was built by Frank Jr and his son Matthew on what had been the Sponaugle family cattle farm since 1954. Frank and Matthew continued their work on the property and grew the golf course to what is known today as an 18-hole course.

In 2000, the family expanded their business with the addition of a 9-room inn on the property to promote flyfishing trips along the Jackson River on the property, giving fisherman a place to conveniently stay in a beautiful setting close to the river they would fish.

Over the course of the next 25 years Cliff View Golf Club Inc. would continue to be run by the Sponaugle family. There was a family style restaurant operated by the family for several years on the property but was closed in 2000 due to the workload and the elder Sponaugles approach to retirement. The focus of the business remained on the golf course and the adjacent inn.

In 2019 Matthew, son of Frank Jr. and Susan, took over management of Cliff View Golf Club Inc. and he began to formulate a business plan for the growth and further development of the business and property, but the advancement of Matt's plans were delayed to the pandemic that impacted businesses worldwide in early 2020. Matt utilized these challenges presented to business operations during the pandemic as a catalyst to rebrand the business, rework the business model, and become creative in formulating a business plan that could propel the business through the pandemic and meet the needs of a community and local businesses that struggling in the face of the pandemic.

New logos for the business and a new website were launched to begin the revitalization of Cliff View Golf Club Inc. Matt had a vision for building additional amenities on the property that would encourage visits from locals and visitors to the area that were not golfers or fly

fisherman. Matt's vision was to add a grille that would service golfers, fisherman, inn guests, and the community offering grille food for lunches. He also formulated plans for the addition of draft beer offered at The Brewhouse, property beautification, the addition of an outdoor patio seating area, and he entertained to possibility of one day reopening the restaurant. He wanted to create a property that would serve not only golfers and fisherman, but his rural community. This business plan and vision would not only serve to grow the family business, but would create employment opportunities.

In late 2020 Matt began implementing his plan and his and his best friend began renovations on the existing clubhouse to build what would become The Brewhouse. It was in early 2021 that his vision really took life and multiple beautification, and expansion projects were completed and the opening of The Brewhouse and the grille occurred July 3, 2021. The opening of the grille and the addition of a general manager for the business, created a foundation that would allow Matt, the COO of the business, to move forward with additional plans for the growth and expansion of Cliff View Golf Club inc.

The Brewhouse opened its full-service restaurant in late summer of 2021, added live entertainment in late 2022, and boasted great success in the first six months of operation. It was the early success of The Brewhouse that became the foundation of plans for further expansion to include an outdoor entertainment venue, outdoor kids play area, outdoor kitchen, and plans for additional scheduled activities, festivals, and events that would cater to members of the local community, inn guests and become a draw to the area from individuals seeking a rural "getaway" with activities that would give them an "experience".

What has been your biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge, as faced by most small businesses, is finding employees and retaining employees. The hospitality industry is a tough industry.

What is an interesting fact about your business that most people don't know?

An interesting fact about the Brewhouse is that Jen Mann, the main chef, has no formal culinary training. She retired from 33 years of medicine to follow her passion of cooking and all of the items on the menu are original creations that were created by Matt Sponaugle and Jen.

What do you enjoy most about doing business in the Alleghany Highlands?

The greatest enjoyment about having a small business in the Alleghany Highlands is the opportunity to form small business partnerships, allowing for small businesses to collaborate and aid each other in creative ways to create a supportive network and success for all. We also love our patrons and the lasting relationships we have built with them.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

The Brewhouse is a unique twist on a local pub that offers a family friendly environment with indoor and outdoor seating and weekly live entertainment. There are plans for continued growth and development of all aspects of Cliff View.

Thank you Cliff View Golf Course/Brewhouse for all you do to support the Alleghany Highlands!