

A business venture with cultural roots

Local woman founds travel business with focus on China

BY HANK LONG

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When Katie Dailey was laid off from her job as a software development engineer at 3M a little over a year ago, the mother of three took a short mental break from working to reevaluate what she wanted to do with her career. Her light-bulb moment came almost immediately.

A year later the founder of Dailey Travel is doing what she loves - helping connect business travelers and vacationers with her home country of China.

The business specializes in three main services: education, vacation and business consultation.

Dailey, who came to America 19 years ago after earning an engineering degree at a top university in China, settled in Woodbury about 12 years ago with her American-born husband Clark.

Amid raising her children (two teens and one toddler), Dailey worked for 8 years at Imation in Oakdale and then

three years for 3M. Dailey said working for two large American-based corporations over the last decade have helped her see the real opportunities for smaller businesses to do commerce in China as well.

"The opportunity is huge," she said. "But the famous saying in China is 'Everything is possible, but nothing is easy,' which is why I like to advise people before they go looking for opportunities to expand their business in China that they need to do their homework."

The homework Dailey refers to is not only learning exactly where in China the commerce opportunities exist but also learning about culture and customs that are important to making connections in one of the most competitive markets in the world.

Utilizing connections

As a part of her consultation Dailey offers language and business culture classes to business travelers who plan to make a trip to China. She holds her classes entitled "Practical Chinese for Business Travelers and Tourists" once a week at Century College in White Bear



STAFF PHOTO BY HANK LONG

Katie Dailey left a career in software engineering to start her own travel business which caters to tourists and business travelers visiting China.

Lake. She also teaches similar classes to 3M employees who travel to China on business.

Over the years Dailey has found herself using her long-established connections in China to help friends and colleagues pick out the best places to stay and sites to see while on their trip to China. She said has used those strong connections to develop her love of helping others get the most out of their stay in her native country into a business model for vacation consultation.

"I have worked hard to find the best options for people who are planning a vacation to China," Dailey said, "And I think having someone who lives here (in Woodbury) and has those strong connections (to China) is comforting for people."

Dailey said she has long-term goals to expand her business to a metro-wide market and obtain office space outside her home, but for now she plans to continue to cater to vacationers and business travelers in the east metro area.

She said she loves the interaction she has with clients when teaching them about China or consulting them on an upcoming trip, but feels most satisfied when she hears from them upon their return.

"When they come back and tell me they had a great time, that's what makes me most happy," Dailey said.

To learn more about Dailey Travel go to www.daileytravelservice.com

WORLD EXPO 2010: SHANGHAI

Only a year and a half after the Olympic Games were staged in Beijing another major international event will be held in China.

From May 1 to Oct. 31 the World Expo will be held in Shanghai. According to organizers the event is expected to attract more than 70 million visitors from around the world. Katie Dailey, of Dailey Travels, said the World Expo presents a great opportunity for business travelers and tourists to see China and participate in a world-renowned event.

"It's an event that features businesses and attractions from around the world and it's taking place in my home city," Dailey said. "So it's pretty exciting."

Dailey said she is offering travel consultation for the World Expo and is also hoping to organize a trip for students to see the country and the event.

For more information on the World Expo 2010 go to: www.en.expo2010.cn