





BY BRANDI CROSSEN

STARTING A BUSINESS is no small feat, especially when you're just a teenager with a dream and limited resources. For the founder of Dale's Clothing, Jenna Harlan, this dream was turned into a reality in 2014 when, at just 19 years old, she launched their first store. The original Dale's was opened up in the downstairs portion of Jenna's grandparents' old antique shop. The antique shop was originally just an old building that had been added onto three times in the 1970's. Within only three months of opening, the Dale's remodeled and opened up the upstairs portion of the building. What began as a space for unique and antique finds for her grandparents quickly transformed into a thriving retail business in the heart of Searcy, Arkansas.

"I obviously had not the first clue about running my own business. I just kind of learned as I went."

**- JENNA HARLAN,
Owner and Founder of Dale's Clothing**

Jenna started with only \$5,000.00 from her personal savings account and a great eye for stock selection. Jenna noted that she reinvested profits back into the business rather than taking out loans from a bank. This approach, especially in the early days of Dale's Clothing, proved to be invaluable for growth. Not having a huge debt to pay back allowed Dale's to move forward."

In 2015, Dale's took another step forward with growth by opening up the men's store across the parking lot. Jenna's ultimate goal was to merge both stores into a single location. Initially, they set a five-year goal for this merger, but unforeseen challenges, such as the global COVID pandemic, stretched that timeline. They

had visions to construct a new building instead of purchasing one, but instead, the old Kroger building went up for sale.

Jenna stated, "It was the perfect opportunity. It took about seven months of remodeling to get the building into the shape it is today."

**- JENNA HARLAN,
Owner and Founder of Dale's Clothing**

"Seeing a trend and being able to catch on is so nice because you get that influx of orders or people coming in wanting that specific item, and it's like, 'Yes! I know I am doing something right!' when that happens," Jenna explained. Looking back over the previous decade, Jenna realized that one of her biggest motivators and favorite things about running Dale's is picking out new pieces and spotting new trends.

"I love going to market and getting to pick out the pieces while also seeing all the new trends. I love seeing the pieces come in and then being able to style them for a photoshoot."

**- JENNA HARLAN,
Owner and Founder of Dale's Clothing**

Last year marked a significant milestone for Dale's Clothing, their tenth anniversary. With a decade of memories in the rearview mirror, they have now shifted their focus toward future growth.

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“As far as the future for Dale’s, we are currently just looking to grow our local business as well as our online business.”

**-JENNA HARLAN,
Owner and Founder of Dale’s Clothing**

From humble beginnings starting with \$5,000.00 in an old remodeled antique shop, Jenna’s love for retail and making people feel confident in the clothes they are in, has blossomed into more than a decade’s worth of the latest trends in fashion, custom boots, children’s clothing, home goods, and more!

If you haven’t been to Dale’s, I highly encourage you to stop by and meet their team and witness firsthand what this small downstairs-only business has flourished into over the last decade. The atmosphere is welcoming, the staff is friendly, and the selection is diverse—truly catering to a variety of fashion tastes and needs. They’re located at 1601 E. Race Avenue here in Searcy, Arkansas. The future looks promising for this local, small town business, thanks to Jenna’s passion and dedication, the hard work of her team, and her unwavering commitment to the community. Jenna’s journey serves as an inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs everywhere, showing them that with determination, vision, and hard work, dreams can be turned into reality.

For those interested in following Dale’s Clothing journey, you can connect with them on social media platforms like Facebook (Dale’s Clothing), Instagram (@shopdalesclothing), TikTok (shopdalesclothing), and even in the app store (Shop Dales Clothing)! Jenna and her dedicated team work diligently to keep their audience engaged by posting new arrivals, market sneak peaks, sale pieces, and so much more. Dale’s Clothing offers items for men, women, kids, home, and gifts. They proudly carry reputable brands such as Ariat, Wrangler, Anderson Bean, Birkenstock, Burlebo, Dear John, Mud Pie, and Silver Jeans, ensuring that there is something for everyone. They’re your one stop shop for all fashion needs. *

