

## Heidi Plumb, Kale Dankenbring 3 – High Plains Moto

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

High speed on the high plains. That is what one can find when we see the product of the work done by an innovative entrepreneur in rural northwest Kansas. It's today's Kansas Profile.

During the last two weeks we have learned about Heidi Plumb and Kale Dankenbring who traveled around the globe as newlyweds. They came back to Kale's hometown of St. Francis to become the founders and co-owners of Fresh Seven Coffee, plus a business next door named High Plains Moto. This business services and sells products for motorcycles and other smaller motorized vehicles such as ATVs.

When Kale was ten years old, his cousin was involved in a bad motorcycle accident. Some years later, Kale was riding on a motorcycle with his father's friend when they crashed on a muddy road.

"I had an insane fear of motorcycles," Kale said. However, Kale also had a fascination with them. He bought one for himself at age 22. "I would ride it during the summer. In the winter, I would tear it apart to learn how it worked," Kale said. Soon he was helping his friends work on their motorcycles as well, and found he was quite good at it.

One day in 2001, he was riding his motorcycle on the street when a car pulled out directly in front of him. "I t-boned the car," Kale said. "I woke up in the helicopter on the way to the hospital," he said. He had numerous broken bones and spent a week in the hospital and another month home in bed.

"I knew I never wanted to ride a motorcycle on the street again," Kale said. However, he realized that he could still enjoy his motorcycle by taking up road racing on enclosed tracks, and that is what he did. He enjoyed road racing, and also put his expertise to use by opening a motorcycle shop with a partner.

After Kale met and married Heidi, he sold his share of the business to his partner so that he and Heidi could travel the globe. While traveling, he and Heidi learned that an abandoned building was for sale in Kale's hometown of St. Francis. This would become the site of their coffee roastery. Next door to the coffee shop, Kale opened a motorcycle sales and service business of his own. He named it High Plains Moto.

High Plains Moto serves motorcycles as well as other vehicles. "A lot of farmers are using dirt bikes or ATVs to check cattle or wells or sprinklers, and that kept me busy at first," Kale said. Those vehicles came from farms near rural communities such as Sharon Springs, population 748; Bird City, population 477; and McDonald, population 156 people. Now, that's rural.

High Plains Moto specializes in equipment and service for track day and motorcycle road race machines. These are the gorgeous speedy motorcycles that swoop low on the turns and can go up to 190 miles an hour in the straightaway. Kale works on exhaust and brake systems, hand and foot controls, tires and tire warmers (I didn't know there was such a thing), racing suits, stands

and more. In 2019, Kale became a technician certified by Ohlins, the Swedish suspension company.

Before he opened his shop, bike riders in the area had to make multiple trips to drop off their bikes in in Denver or Nebraska for service or repairs. Now, Kale offers convenient service for bike riders throughout the three state region.

Kale continues to race himself. "I race for fun and to promote my business," Kale said. "If I happen to win prize money, that's a bonus," he said. "The fastest I've ever gone on a track was 172 (miles per hour)," he said. Wow.

For more information, go to [www.highplainsmoto.com](http://www.highplainsmoto.com).

High speed on the high plains. That describes what a person can achieve when working with Kale at High Plains Moto. We commend Kale Dankenbring and Heidi Plumb for making a difference with their skills and entrepreneurship. He's helping people safely achieve high speed in the high plains, and such a business has high value.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.