

Central City Republican

Archer man forges new path

Don't tell Mike Foulk he can't do something. Sure as you do, he'll set out to prove you wrong. And, these days, he's got the spunk—and the help—he needs to do just that.

With the support of his family and the timely assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Foulk has recently set out on a voyage he once would have deemed next to impossible: starting his own business and, even better, making

See "FOULK", Page 3

Mike Foulk

continued from front

a go of it.

But the story starts long before today.

On April 9, 1988, when Foulk was only 20, he lost control of his '87 Cavalier when he hit sleet on the S-curves south of Worms.

"I slid off the road, hit the gravel, and just launched that car," says Foulk. "They tell me it did a pirouette nose-dive."

Foulk's head hit the top of the car, causing a compression fracture of the spine and leaving him a paraplegic.

"I was in the hospital for three months," says Foulk, "just learning the things I would need to survive."

For an active hunter who had always worked with his uncle Myron on the farm, this was a whole new world, and a frightening one.

But Mike started the process at the beginning, enlisting the help of Voc Rehab get both training for and placement in a job as a small engine mechanic, first in Grand Island and then in his own shop in Central City.

Years later, when carpal

tunnel symptoms and a slow economy dictated a change, Voc Rehab again helped Mike rethink his future, and he worked as a troubleshooter for Cabela's for a few years.

Then, a little over a year ago, Mike was casting about for an idea to help support wife Natalie and their two kids Gage and Isabell . . . especially with the approaching birth of daughter Vandaly.

"I was driving around one day and I saw piles of concrete sitting everywhere," says Foulk. "I thought there has *got* to be something you can do with that."

Hours on the Internet in research, the enlistment of brother Leland as a partner, countless trips to the bank, and one call to faithful supporter Voc Rehab later, Mike found himself the owner of a concrete grinding business engaged in the re-purposing of old concrete for a variety of uses.

Through it all, Foulk says, he's been blessed by an innate desire to succeed and

to provide for his family, but also by the support that Voc Rehab has provided in the way of training, placement, and advocacy services.

The organization, which is funded by a 75/25 federal/state formula, has also been the go-to organization for helping Mike with adaptive or assistive technologies such as hand controls for his truck or a lift to allow him easier access to his home, his pickup, and even his construction equipment.

A part of Foulk's start up costs—computer, printer, puncture-proof skidsteer tires, and the like—even came from funding Voc Rehab found for him through Easter Seals.

"Mike, really, is his own advocate," says Voc Rehab's Rita Meier, who works in the Grand Island office. "We work to help him—and those with any kind of disability—prepare for and get a job."

For Foulk, at least, the formula has worked three times to date.

And there's no stopping him now.