

SWEET SUCCESS

Laura's Candy enters the chocolates market

BRANCHING OUT: She has opened a retail outlet in former Dunn Bros. shop in hilltop North Mankato

By Tim Krohn

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Laura Dhuyvetter is betting that high-quality home-made chocolates, premium coffee drinks, good food and special experiences like roasting marshmallows at your table to make premium s'mores will be keys to success. "It's a risk in this economy, especially in light of seeing the local businesses recently that had to close their doors. But I think we're unique and hope that makes a difference," Dhuyvetter said. Laura's Candy & Coffee has had a soft opening the past week or so at 1745 Commerce Drive in the former Dunn Bros. coffee shop. Dhuyvetter has operated Laura's Candy — which features gourmet marshmallows — for six years and was looking for a small retail store to offer expanded candy offerings. "But when this building became available, I thought it was a great chance to mix good coffee drinks with the chocolates." The focus is on the chocolates she's been producing for the past six months or so. "I was dabbling in making chocolates, but you can't just dabble in it and do it right." So she joined a retail chocolate group, took professional training and refined her techniques. She uses Valrhona chocolate, a fine French chocolate produced since the 1920s. "I never sacrifice flavor and using quality ingredients. But you still have to watch the price." Dhuyvetter uses illy — rhymes with the town Ely — Italian espresso coffee. The brand gets top

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Photos by Pat Christman

Laura Dhuyvetter has opened Laura's Candy & Coffee on Commerce Drive in North Mankato, featuring homemade chocolates, coffee drinks, soups, sandwiches and more.



Laura Dhuyvetter uses a French chocolate to make all of her chocolate creations.

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reviews in many industry magazines and is a popular brand on the coasts and in Europe.

"It's a real well-rounded, smooth coffee," she said.

To add to the flavored drinks, Dhuyvetter makes her own caramel and chocolate sauces to mix with the lattes and mochas.

She also is offering breakfast sandwiches, muffins, scones and other baked-from-scratch goods, sandwiches, soups and salads.

While customers can't yet make their own s'mores, it's something she plans to offer in the near future. She makes a variety of flavored gourmet marshmallows and homemade graham crackers. "I'll have a bite-size s'mores platter with four flavors and you can roast them right at your table."

She also plans soon to stay open later a couple of nights a week and focus on different desserts and coffee.

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