



**COUPLE RELOCATES
MARKETING AGENCY
SERVING SMALL
BUSINESSES TO
CAÑON CITY**

Erica and Kenny Haferkamp have been almost inseparable since they met when they were 16 years old. After graduating from high school, Kenny joined the U.S. Marines and Erica followed in his footsteps two years later. When their service commitments came to an end in 2003, they returned to near their roots in the small town of Cleburne, Texas, where they raised their two daughters.

Laying the Groundwork for a Private Sector Transition

During his service, Kenny worked as an Environmental Compliance Officer and completed a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management. Part of his job responsibilities included web development. Erica initially was a drummer in the Marine Corps Band but was retrained in Information Technology and oversaw a team of 15 Marines who designed and developed numerous websites and web portals supporting 10,000-plus users of the air wing network.

Upon leaving the Marine Corps, Erica was hired as the Assistant Director of Information Technology for the Johnson County Government where she supervised a team of 10 support specialists. In the meantime, Kenny decided to launch directly into his own business, with Erica working part time with him, and founded Sagentic Web Design—which they named after their daughter Autumn "Sage" Bless. After two years building the company, Erica was finally able to join Kenny full time.



“Technology makes it possible for one to run a tech business from virtually anywhere.”

Erica Haferkamp, Co-owner and Creative Director at Sagentic Web Design and DARE Print & Sign Co.

Building a Successful Rural Tech Business in North Texas

Being from a small town in rural America, Kenny and Erica have been passionate about working with and empowering small businesses from day one. “Small businesses are the backbone of rural America,” Kenny relates. “It is really invigorating to work with small businesses and help them to build a brand presence and grow their revenue streams.” Upon leaving the Marine Corps, Erica was hired as the Assistant Director of Information Technology for the Johnson County Government where she supervised a team of 10 support specialists. In the meantime, Kenny decided to launch directly into his own business, with Erica working part time with him, and founded Sagentic Web Design—which they named after their daughter Autumn "Sage" Bless. After two years building the company, Erica was finally able to join Kenny full time.

Kenny and Erica also elected to purchase a building in downtown Cleburne. “Having a storefront presence is important when you’re in a small town,” Erica says. “We want to be part of the community. The building we purchased was directly across from the County Courthouse that I worked at in Johnson County, Texas.” If Erica didn’t have enough on her plate already, she completed a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing while serving as the Creative Director for Sagentic Web Design. Likewise, Kenny completed two master’s degrees during the same timeframe—a Master of Business Administration in Marketing and a Master of Science in Coaching and Education.

“Our continuing education broadens our horizons and enables us to better serve our clients,” Kenny notes. But his academic interests were not just related to the business. He completed the second master’s degree to provide him with more training and education in coaching and education of their daughters. Specifically, as both Kenny and Erica were highly involved in the Cleburne Soccer Association and the Dynamos FC, where Kenny served as the director of coaching and club director, respectively, the degree was a natural evolution.

Having worked together for years, Erica and Kenny have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Erica serves as the Creative Director, while Kenny works as the Lead Web Developer. “Erica is probably the only person in the world who I would trust to do things the way I want them to be done,” Kenny says. “We think along the same lines and pull in the same direction. It comes naturally for us.”

After graduating from high school, Kenny’s and Erica’s two daughters decided to follow their parents’ path in the military—one joined the U.S. Marine Corps and the other the U.S. Air Force. Both of them ended up being stationed in California. “We wanted to be closer to them and were ready for a change,” Erica says. Kenny and Erica sold their downtown storefront and home in Cleburne and moved to California in 2018. “We wanted to support them in their first year in the service,” she adds.

Taking the “Long Route” to Fremont County

With an established customer base, Kenny and Erica had the flexibility to pick up and move across the country. “It was a bit like an extended vacation, though we continued to support our existing clientele,” Erica explains. “Technology makes it possible for one to run a tech business from virtually anywhere. One of our daughters got married, and we were able to help plan and attend her wedding on the beach.”

Kenny and Erica knew all along this was temporary and that they wanted to return to their rural roots. Erica’s parents had purchased 105 acres of land outside of Cañon City in Fremont County about 20 years ago, and Kenny and she were familiar with the area from years of family vacations and camping trips. They picked up their bags again and moved

east to rural Colorado in March 2019. As they did when they started their business in North Texas, Kenny and Erica wanted a storefront in downtown Cañon City.

Building Out Two Storefronts

Always up for a challenge, they elected to rent a space in a building built in 1898 that was previously a Dungeons and Dragons gaming shop. “It was painted purple on the inside and in need of major work,” Kenny describes. Kenny, who has remodeled numerous properties, and Erica rolled up their sleeves and got to work. Within two months, the storefront was completely



renovated and opened for business. With a presence in downtown Cañon City, Kenny and Erica began to attract the attention—and business—of other small businesses and organizations in Fremont County. “They are now two of the nicest looking storefronts on main street,” Erica touts.

When the next-door storefront became available, Kenny and Erica jumped at the opportunity to expand their business



presence. “We have a lot of customers with print requirements and felt we could generate a new revenue stream and serve them better at the same time,” Erica explains. In January 2020, they opened a full print and signage services business. Wanting to make sure their other daughter knows just how important she is, the business was named after her, Jeorjia “Dare” Ewing —DARE Print & Sign Co.

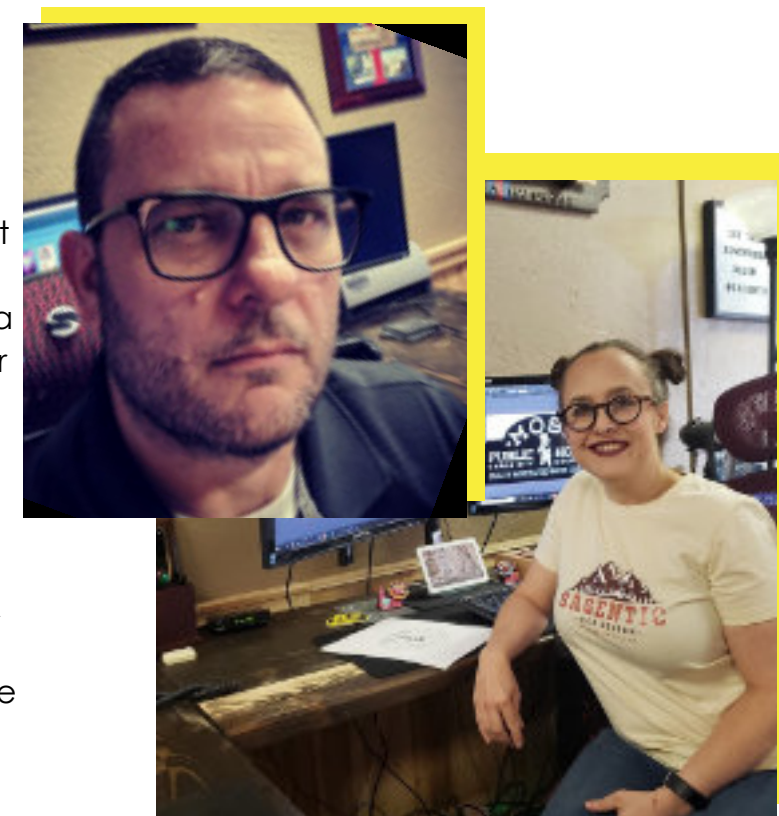
Comprehensive Business Approach - Long Term Relationships

Kenny and Erica chose when they launched Sagentic Web Design in 2003 to develop long-term relationships with clients. They do not take on one-off projects but rather sign clients to annual retainers. “In order for clients to achieve the full value of digital marketing, they must follow a regimen of best practices—from brand development and refinement to web content and social promotion,” Kenny relays. “Without the right brand foundation in place, for example, digital marketing activities will be ineffective.”

Most of the small businesses and non-profit organizations who walk through the doors of Sagentic Web Design aren’t certain where to start when it comes to digital marketing. “They almost always say the same thing: ‘I have no idea where to start’,” Kenny explains. “We have a proven methodology that we walk them through. Digital marketing is a comprehensive approach. It isn’t just a website but the entire online presence—from social media to directory listings. Google may have a listing for them, but most have no idea how to edit their listing.”

Sagentic Web Design becomes intimately familiar with all of their customers. “If you have a roofing company, we will perform extensive research on roofing keywords and ask questions such as ‘What content should we develop?’, ‘What are the trends?’, ‘What organic search results are your competitors generating?’,” Kenny says. “We go the ‘extra mile’ to become experts on every one of our clients.”

Though only in Cañon City for a little more than a year, Sagentic Web Design is off to a running start and adding Fremont County businesses to an already long list of clients. A few of the local small businesses that have signed annual contracts include the Humane Society of Fremont County, 11th Judicial District Attorney, and You Scream Treat Emporium to name just a few.



Leveraging **Tech** Workers & PTECH Interns in **Cañon City**

Sagentic Web Design and DARE Print & Co. are only a block down main street from the Fremont Economic Development Corporation's TechSTART center. But Kenny and Erica learned about TechSTART before they moved to Cañon City. "I reached out to the economic development director at the time, and he connected me with Brad Rowland at TechSTART," Erica recalls. "He briefed me on what TechSTART was doing, and I started attending TechSTART meetings immediately upon arriving here."

The benefits they've reaped from TechSTART have been significant. Recognizing the immense knowledge Kenny and Erica possess around digital marketing and small rural businesses, Rowland arranged to have them present at one of TechSTART's monthly lunch time meetings focused on continuing education. "I discussed the differences between a do-it-yourself solution and an agency approach like ours," Kenny says. "It gave us a lot of attention and brought a number of small businesses through our doors right out of the gate."

Kenny and Erica really appreciate the collaboration that takes place between different TechSTART

members. "Whenever we run into a question that we don't know the answer to, we can go to TechSTART members and help find the right solution for the problem," Erica says. "We've also used numerous TechSTART members—as well as a few entrepreneurs and businesses over at the Emergent Campus in Florence—for subcontract work such as videography and photography." Kenny adds, "We didn't have these types of resources at our disposal in Cleburne. This is a huge value add. And it simply isn't a one-way street. Those same businesses benefit from attaching themselves to us, as we have a storefront that provides them with access to a much larger customer base."

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Kenny Haferkamp, Co-Owner and Lead Developer at Sagentic Web Design



Excited to Be a Member of a Thriving Rural **Tech** Community

For any successful business, it isn't easy to pick up and move across multiple states and reestablish yourself in a completely new community. This is where a rural innovation ecosystem and center like TechSTART pays dividends. "I cannot underestimate the importance that TechSTART played in facilitating our move to Cañon City," Erica says. "Fremont County is a special place for rural tech because of TechSTART. And the thriving rural tech community continues to grow and expand its positive impact on Cañon City and Fremont County."



ABOUT [FEDC TECHSTART](#)

Fremont Economic Development Corporation is a 501(c)6 professional economic development organization focused directly on business attraction, retention and expansion in Fremont County, Colorado. With an established and growing network of business, academic and governmental partners, we directly assist companies with competitive location or expansion projects by connecting them with the right people, the appropriate resources and the most meaningful and relevant information. FEDC's TechSTART program is an award-winning tech sector co-working community, creating an innovation catalyst for rural Colorado.

FEDC TechSTART is a proud supporter of the Upper Arkansas Technology Sector Partnership, the second tech sector partnership in the state of Colorado.