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Missoula Regional SBDC

Tier One Solar

Victor, MT



"Starting a rural business that intends to launch a nationwide sales campaign is not an easy task. Without engaging the wisdom and insight of the SBDC, it is near impossible."

Ryan Duarte, *Owner*

Ryan Duarte is a serial entrepreneur with an eye for unique market opportunities. Having operated a number of businesses selling from app development services, to luxury camping dome sales and high efficiency windows all while operating a Montana ranch, Ryan has talents for spotting needs, developing teams, and pursuing big dreams.

Ryan could not find the kind of portable power storage and portable power generation equipment he needed for life on a Montana ranch, so he put together a team to build a solution to that problem. The result is Tier 1 Solar, a product which addresses ranch life needs as well as leverages the technology to solve large scale energy sector needs for a variety of scenarios.

When Ryan decided to turn his need for power solutions into a business, he knew he needed help planning and achieving market penetration in a new industry experiencing exponential annual growth. He knew the field would fill up quickly with competitors and brand recognition would not be easily achieved. He needed help from people who knew how to get from the first step of incorporation to national brand recognition. Having worked with Missoula SBDC in the past, Ryan reached out for insight, connections, and guidance to quickly scale his business.

The Missoula SBDC office assisted Tier 1 Solar in leveraging their technology to provide large-scale energy needs in nationwide remote locations - like the owner's ranch in rural Montana. The Missoula SBDC office made referrals to help Tier 1 Solar build its team to quickly acquire first round and subsequent funding, and launch quickly in a competitive market. Missoula SBDC has also helped connect Tier 1 Solar to the U.S. Commercial Service for future international sales exploration. To date, Tier 1 Solar has closed \$922,000 in seed and Series A funding while creating 4 jobs. Today, the Missoula SBDC helps Tier 1 Solar explore possible project sites and incentives in Montana communities for their manufacturing facility.