



Meet Luke Leszyk, owner of Admiral Peabody's Lakeside Lodging...

1. Describe Your Business:

Admiral Peabody's Lakeside lodging has six short-term rental units. "We have everything from a three-bedroom cottage with one and a half bathrooms, two two-bedroom cottages, a one-bedroom cottage, and a couple of bungalows," Luke said. "We have 215 feet of lake access with some docks. We're not a bed and breakfast or a motel. You have your own units with kitchens. We're a pretty unique establishment."

2. Tell us your story:

Luke and his wife both own Admiral Peabody's Lakeside lodging. Prior to this, Luke worked for the state police as a trooper. "I knew I was getting to the end of my career, and I wanted to retire. But I knew I wanted to do something else too," Luke explained. "One day I saw that this property had come up for sale, and I thought this would be a neat perspective of dealing with the public. Because the other way of dealing with the public you would never see people on a good day. Now all I see are people on a good day."

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

"I'm still gaining that experience, because I've never done this before. I've never run a lodging establishment," Luke said. "It was one of those things where we were thrown right into it. I didn't really work with the old owner because it was the winter months. We closed in May on a Monday, my last day of work was Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we switched the utilities over, and on Friday the old owner moved to Florida. We were already mostly full that weekend. It was a trial by fire, learning the do's and don'ts. The old owner was as busy as she wanted to be, and I knew I wanted to be busier. We started a website, advertised, joined the Schuyler County Tourism and Lodging Association, and joined the Chamber to get our name out a little bit more. So far it has been a great success."

4. What inspires you?

"I think one of the things that inspires most people is to succeed. You don't want to jump into something thinking it's not going to work. It has to work. Don't give yourself a choice," Luke said. "There have been times in the past where I've taken risks with my career, and you just jump in with both feet. There's no quitting or giving up. There have been trials and tribulations with the business, but it inspires me to succeed and do well."

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

"The first of owning the business there were a lot of sleepless night," Luke said. "We had bought the business and jumped right into it. We were redoing things like putting a porch on the house, building an office, and building walkways. There was a lot of construction going on, and I hadn't had the time to go into all the cottages and do the repairs that needed to be done. I would just lay awake at night wondering which guest was going to call because something had broken and I hadn't been able to do the maintenance. Now those sleepless nights are getting less and less because I've done the work. We've painted, updated the plumbing, and things like that. It was a matter of having those sleepless night to motivate me in the winter to get the work done. It's like any job – familiarity makes it easier."

6. What is your favorite local activity?

"I just love the area in general as far as activities," Luke said. "I love wineries and breweries. That's what makes this job so rewarding. People will come into town and have no plans for the weekends. I'll tell them to go down to see the gorge at Watkins Glen State Park, and they won't have any idea what I'm talking about because they've come for a different reason. Or it will be a rainy day, so I'll tell them to go down to the Corning Museum of Glass. I love the area, so it is easy to talk about the area and brag about certain things in the area. I always feel like I can't give a recommendation to a place I haven't been to, so it forces me to get out and go wine tasting or go to different places. It's fun and it is easy to talk about something you love."