



Derrick Wilson, owner of Options Catering and Delivery, prepares food with a Cajun twist for clients. He launched his small business with guidance and support from CompuRecycling Center.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## The Secret to Success Isn't Found in a Sauce

With support from Regions, this nonprofit is redefining futures one step at a time.

By Jennifer Elmore | October 19, 2020

Derrick Wilson and Lemoire King know good food. The flavors. The sauces. All the right ingredients.

Wilson prefers food with a Cajun twist – a unique blend of spices for just the right kick. King is a solid barbecue man. Ribs, to be exact.

Don't underestimate the power of good food.

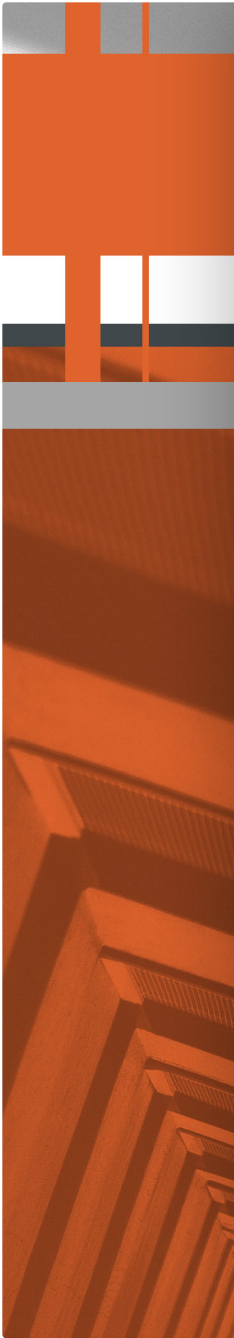
"Food is a way to connect to people," Wilson shared.

Both men grew up in the Mississippi Delta, [an area rich in music and cultural history](#), and started cooking at a young age. Wilson knew he wanted to be a chef at age 12. It took King a little longer to discover he had a similar calling, but after working as a pitmaster at an Orlando barbecue restaurant, he knew he had the ability to open his own restaurant.

Both men, in fact, had the skills. The passion. The commitment. What they needed was a method for turning their concepts into completion.

It's been said the secret is in the sauce. But in the Delta, the secret to starting or growing a small business isn't found in a sauce at all. In fact, it's not even a secret. It's Gene Finley. People will tell you small-business support is his calling.

So Wilson and King turned to Finley and his nonprofit, the [CompuRecycling Center](#), in Greenville. Finley has more than 25 years of experience managing and growing his own business. He knows the challenges small-business owners face, and he has a track record of success that he shares with others.



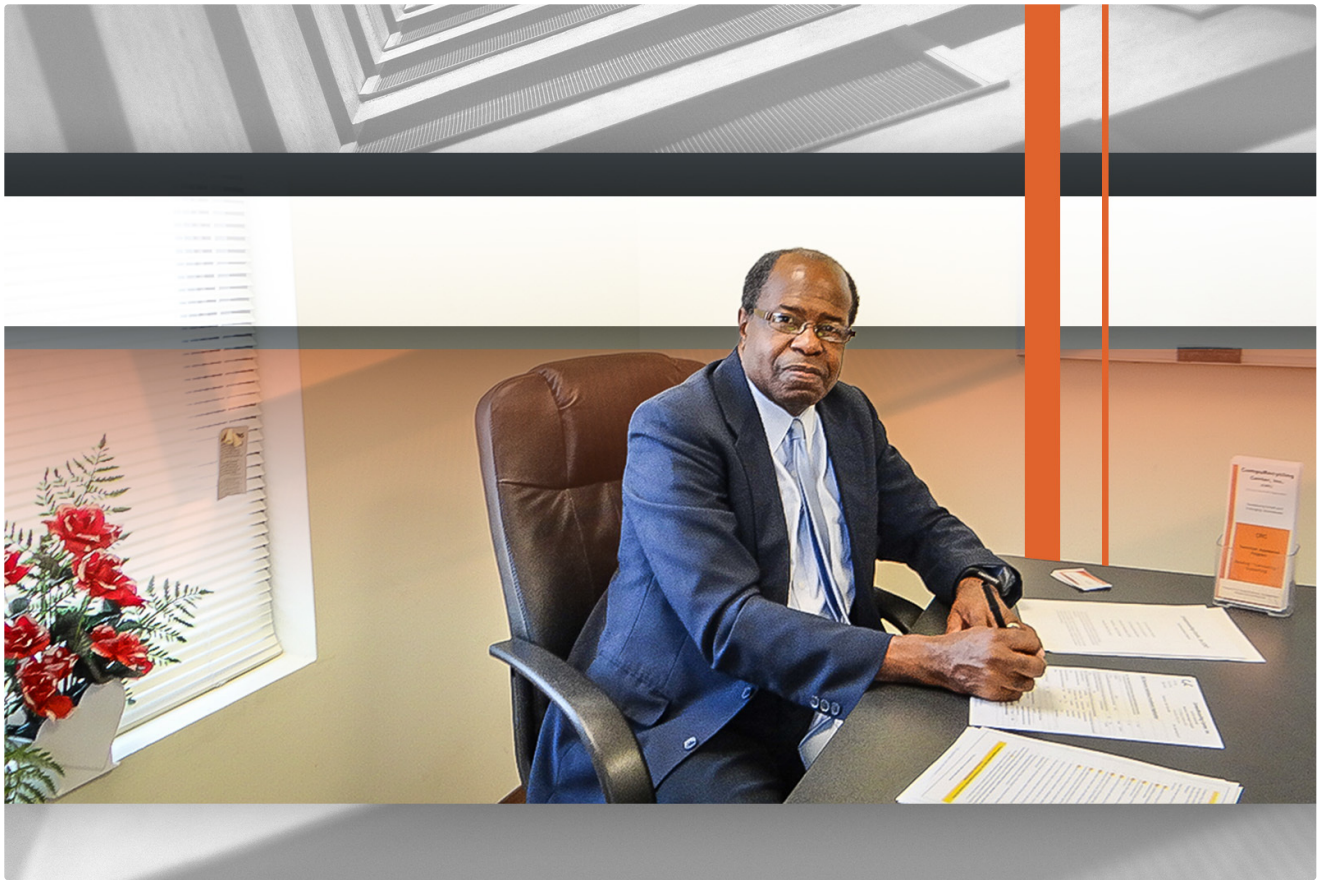
The mission of CompuRecycling Center, Inc., is to serve as a technical assistance center for minority, women-owned and emerging businesses throughout the Mississippi Delta.

It is the nonprofit initiative of CompuRecycling Company that Finley started more than 25 years ago.

King started learning at CompuRecycling Center with only his dream, while Wilson had begun the process of getting his business, Options Catering and Delivery, ready.

Finley helped them develop business plans, create websites and other marketing strategies, complete necessary paperwork, and much more. His approach is simple.

“I help people build a small business by using the skills they already have to make a living,” Finley said.



*Gene Finley started CompuRecycling Center to help entrepreneurs and small-business owners with opportunities to start or grow a business in the Mississippi Delta. As part of the training program Finley's nonprofit provides, Regions Bank volunteers teach financial wellness classes for clients.*

Regions Bank works with CompuRecycling Center to help small-business owners across the Delta. Cindy Deerman, who manages a Regions branch in Greenville, volunteers to teach financial wellness classes for those needing guidance on the financial side of running a company. In addition, the bank contributes financially to the nonprofit in support of the Delta Emerging Small Business Conference, which brings together state and federal resources to support business creation.

“At Regions, our mission is to make life better in the communities we serve,” said Walt Stephens, Greenville market executive for Regions Bank. “While the Mississippi Delta has experienced economic setbacks over the years, the area is vibrant and ready for business development. CompuRecycling Center is providing opportunities for entrepreneurs who want to invest in this area. Regions associates are proud to support Gene Finley and those he serves.”



*I help people build a small business by using the skills they already have to make a living.*

**Gene Finley, CompuRecycling Center**

Finley said his work often begins by simply listening to those who have an idea.

“I want to know what’s on their heart, and we move forward together from there,” he said. “I tell my clients that we can go as fast or as slow as they want. Once they develop their business plan, we are off to the races.”

King enrolled in a series of classes at CompuRecycling Center, like the financial wellness class taught by Regions, to help get his business going.

“Mr. Gene worked with me step by step to bring my dream of opening Buddies Barbecue to life,” King said.



*Lemore King will open his barbecue restaurant, Buddies Barbecue, later this year.*

Deerman, who worked with both King and Wilson, said the financial courses at CompuRecycling Center are an important resource.

“From financial management, to best practices in helping a company grow, Regions Bank is helping entrepreneurs take a concept for a business – and turn it into a successful company,” she said. “Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. And the success of small-business owners is crucial to the long-term success of the Mississippi Delta.”

It took Wilson about six months to open his business. Once the first event was on his catering book, he knew he made the right decision.

“It was exhilarating because I finally got to share my purpose,” Wilson said.

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**Cindy Deerman, Regions' Sunny branch manager**

King will open Buddies Barbecue soon to a community eager to try his famous sauce. Because even if the secret to launching a business isn't in a sauce – the secret to keeping one like King's attracting new customers will, indeed, be connected to his unique blend of special ingredients.

Turns out, through CompuRecycling Center, both King and Wilson discovered they already had the right ingredients to get a business up and running. All they needed was someone like Finley – who could help them discover the right recipe for success.

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