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Universal Transmissions owner to be recognized by META

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NAMPA — When people bring their cars to Universal Transmissions in Nampa, mechanic Jose Luis Godinez wants them to understand what needs to be done to their car if something is wrong. He wants to make sure that they are comfortable with the work and treats them like he would a friend.

"People come to me and start talking to me and we become friends," Godinez said. He has more than 30 years of experience as a mechanic.

For a new business like Universal Transmissions, building relationships and trust is important. The shop opened in May 2013. Godinez's wife, Martha Espinosa, owns it, and their son, Anthony Espinosa, manages the family business while he's studying to be a mechanic himself at the College of Western Idaho.

Anthony said that when he finishes school, he wants to work at the Nampa shop and maybe open another one.

"I'm getting my feet wet here," he said.

Anthony speaks with pride about the ways they've been able to help customers. Sometimes people have driven by and found the business, others have heard good things. He's also learning from other businesses and has ideas for things he would like to bring to the shop.

For now, the family members are the only employees the business has, but they hope to see that change as it grows.

"(Jose is) very good at his job and has good relationships with the customers," Martha said. "People feel welcome. It's just my son and husband and I for now, but we want to expand the business and keep it growing."

The business has grown a lot in its short time, thanks to referrals and an effort to get the word out, Martha said. Universal Transmissions is near other Hispanic-owned businesses, and those business owners have been supportive, too, she said.

Martha worked at her

BUILDING A FAMILY BUSINESS FROM SCRATCH



Adam Eschbach/IPT

Jose Luis Godinez, the mechanic at Universal Transmissions, looks at a transmission he replaced on a car Tuesday at the shop in Nampa. The family-owned transmission business was started by Jose's wife Martha Espinosa with their son Anthony Espinosa helping out. The small business is being honored by META at the Dividends Through Adversity event.

dad's business in Mexico and studied accounting there. She also had sales experience, but starting a mechanic shop from scratch was something new for the mother of four. They had to figure out how to find the right space, purchase all of the equipment and secure the right permits.

"I was very nervous to start with nothing," she said. "It was just a dream and hard work."

She was able to get help from the nonprofit program MicroEnterprise Training and Assistance, which specializes in helping to launch and grow local businesses. The program



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MARTHA ESPINOSA

Universal Transmissions owner

is honoring Martha and three other individuals at its Dividends Through Diversity event in September. The event is an opportunity to recognize small

UNIVERSAL TRANSMISSIONS

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business owners and encourage others to follow their own path to self-employment, META's program director Ron Berning said in a news release.

The event will be 5:30 to 9 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Riverside Hotel in Boise.

More information can be found metaidaho.org.