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BOUTIQUE SHOPPING, CUSTOMER SERVICE A HIT IN PERHAM

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By Heather Rule

Born and raised in Perham, Andrea Greiff moved out of state for a while before returning a few years ago. She spent time pondering what to do next, knowing she wanted to have her own business. "So one day I just thought, 'Well, Perham's only got one clothing store. Why not try that?'" Greiff said.

So in April 2012 she opened Dot & Minnie's, a women's clothing boutique. She opened Level III Boutique a year later; both shops are located along First Avenue in Perham.

Shoppers can spot Dot & Minnie's by its purple awning and window displays that change weekly.

The Level III building has a unique history, located in the original Bank of Perham building. The original vault is still there and is now used as the clearance area. A December 2018 fire damaged nearby businesses, leaving Level III completely damaged by smoke. The store lost all of its inventory, was gutted and had to be remodeled.

Greiff had the historical leaded-glass window with the Bank of Perham name, reconstructed and put back into place.

Level III carries clothing for a little bit younger customer and offers more contemporary options, as opposed to the classic styles found at Dot & Minnie's. Clothing options include everything from dresses to skirts, sweaters and jackets, leaning toward the casual side. Shoppers can also find all the accessories they want, like jewelry, purses, bags and scarves. Dot & Minnie's jewelry – there are four larger jewelry lines – is a popular option for shoppers as well, because "jewelry always fits, which is nice," Greiff said.

She wants women to wear the clothes they buy from her stores, rather than leave items hanging in their closets. "I have talked to customers every day who are trying on clothes: "Oh, I'm just not sure," Greiff said. "If you're not sure about it, don't buy it, because you shouldn't buy something you don't love."

She's also honest with her customers, if they ask for her opinion on clothing. That trait keeps customers coming back, because they know Greiff will tell them the truth about their choices, she said.

Greiff's stores stand out with their boutique look, and Dot & Minnie's carries a lot of unique lines that no one in the area carries, she said. Ironically, a lot of local shoppers drive to Fargo while many Fargo residents drive to Perham to shop, Greiff said. So it's nice to be able to offer unique boutique options for them. "I hear a lot from people that they don't like to shop in the bigger stores because they don't know where to start," Greiff said. "They

don't feel like they get the service that we can give them, and that's one of the most important things to me is service."

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