

AS SEEN IN THE

OWATONNA  
People's Press



Mike Oldenburg owner of Oldenburg Photography in Owatonna.

## Oldenburg Photography

Photographer Mike Oldenburg, owner of Oldenburg Photography in Owatonna, takes pictures of a lot of different things. But his bread and butter—nearly 85 percent of his business—revolves around sports and sports teams. So, when sport after sport got postponed earlier this year after COVID-19 spread across the state, Oldenburg and his business struggled.

“COVID-19 pretty much shut down that whole part of the business,” Oldenburg recalled. “It was a huge impact to our income over those months, and that continued through the summer.”

Oldenburg said that he managed to sustain himself through savings, unemployment and the JumpStart Owatonna grant that he received from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

“The funds I received from [the Chamber] was phenomenal,” he said. “I can’t say enough about

the work that they did for all the companies. [We used the grant] to pay bills that we had lost income for. It helped us by preventing us from have to dip real deeply into our savings and be as concerned about it.”

According to Oldenburg, sports have picked up slightly in recent months, with more teams requested socially distanced photos. He hopes the trend continues in the fall, but he’s bracing himself for more uncertainty.

“Our business will pull through and be fine,” he said confidently. “As things open up like this, there’s so much uncertainty about what the pandemic will bring for us down the road, but if it continues to go this way, I’m hopeful that we’ll be okay as a business. But we just don’t know... What if we have to shut down if a worse wave comes? We’re not out of the woods yet.”

*by Grace Brandt, special project for the People's Press*

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