

# A DREAM BUILT ON FREE ICE WATER

In 1931, Ted and Dorothy Hustead decided to move to a town that had four things: a good school, a Catholic church, a doctor and an opportunity.

They wanted to open their own pharmacy. They eventually chose Wall, South Dakota, as the perfect location. To others, however, Wall seemed to be in the middle of nowhere – somewhere between the Black Hills and the Badlands. Only 326 people lived there, but Wall seemed the right place for the Husteads to follow their dream. Most of the citizens were farmers who had been wiped out either by the Depression or drought.

The first year was a tough one – thick dust, intense heat and strong winds. In their desire to move on to a more welcoming place, tired, throat-parched travelers rarely stopped in Wall.



Dorothy thought the people driving past might be thirsty, and suggested that Ted put up a sign on the highway advertising free ice water at Wall Drug. It sounded silly, because at that time every drug store gave away free ice water – but Ted put up the sign anyway. By the time he got back to the store, thirsty tourists were lining up for their free ice water. They've been stopping ever since.

Once Ted got it in his head that signs could draw customers, he went billboard-crazy. Painted wooden signs proclaimed “Wall I’ll Be Drugged” and “Wall Drug or Bust” in every state of the union. They even had signs placed in Europe, India, Korea, Egypt and the North Pole!

Today, Wall Drug is the principal industry in the town of Wall. There are 766 people (212 families) residing there. Wall Drug is a sprawling tourist mall that occupies most of downtown and employs nearly a third of its population. Wall Drug draws some 2 million annual visitors – 20,000 on a good summer day – and takes in more than \$10 million a year. If every Wall resident decided to rent a motel room on the same night, there’d still be more than 400 vacancies.

Wall Drug still offers free ice water, but as they have become more popular, they have started to give away free bumper stickers and signs to aid in promotion, and coffee for 5 cents.

(more)

Ted Husted died in 1999. The following day, the governor of South Dakota began his annual State of the State address by commemorating Husted as a “guy that figured out that free ice water could turn you into a phenomenal success in the middle of a semi-arid desert way out in the middle of someplace.”

Ted and Dorothy Husted proved that if you take a step toward your dream, you open yourself to creative ideas and solutions. Taking that big step gives you hope and optimism, which are essential elements for creativity. The size of your success is determined by the size of your belief.



Dream big, step big and do big things.

*Everything is possible for him who believes (Mark 9:23 NIV).*

– Beecher Hunter