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In Your Biz: The Entrepreneur: Michael Alvarez

By [Mila Besich-Lira](http://www.copperarea.com/pages/author/mbesich-lira/) | **Posted** December 4th, 2017 | [🔗](#)

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Mike Alvarez

The word entrepreneur is defined as “a person who organizes and operates a business or businesses, taking on greater than normal financial risks in order to do so” When Michael Alvarez graduated from Superior High School in 1991, he was anxious to move away from Superior, anxious to start his adult life and enjoy every moment of it. His plans in the early 90’s only had him returning to Superior to visit his family; there was no reason to return in his mind.

He attended Mesa Community College. He started his career working for engineering firms, honing his skills with a solid work ethic and eagerness to learn. He married his high-school sweetheart Venita Perez and the two settled down in Gilbert, Arizona. They had a son and a daughter and most recently a grandson has come into their lives. Life was good, moving along and then as most entrepreneurial and determined people do, Michael found that he was bored in his job while working in Mesa. He took a day off, came to Superior and took his mom to lunch at the Cafe Piedra Roja. He hadn’t heard much about the Resolution Copper Project at that time. He began listening to a conversation at a nearby table discussing CAD technology and GIS and other technical processes. He was familiar with all of these terms and discussion topics.

“I apologized for eavesdropping, introduced myself and started asking them questions about the project,” he said. Michael quickly gave them some of his background and it was then he told them he would like to work for Resolution Copper (*as his father, grandfather, uncles and many other family members did*) if any positions were to become available. It wasn’t too long after, he was being contacted to apply for a position and an offer was made.

Meanwhile, Michael had another job offer on the table back in Mesa, making more money, Fridays off and without a commute to Superior from his home in Gilbert.

“Something clicked and I knew I wanted to work in Superior,” he said. That was over 13 years ago and Michael claims it was one of his best decisions. Michael credits his wife Venita for always supporting him in life and taking these business risks. The two are both looking forward to returning to Superior in the next year (*or two or three*) when the remodel of his grandparents’ house is complete.

Over the course of those 13 years working for Resolution Copper, Michael grew more and more optimistic about the future of Superior. He and a cousin partnered together to rehabilitate property that was owned by their family, known as the Bribiescas Casitas, located on Magma Avenue. The family had operated them as rentals and offered them as starter homes for several generations of young couples who married.

“They called them the honeymoon suites,” said Michael. Much like the elders in their family, Michael and his cousin saw a need for short term housing and rentals. They rehabbed these tiny homes (200 to 400 square foot) and opened Copper Cottages. These homes are always occupied. They originally thought they could be used for short term vacation type rentals, but most of their tenants have rented for longer terms. Michael is looking to rehabilitate a few more homes for long term and short term rentals to increase their vacancy.

“The need is there,” he said.

A recent Facebook post about his Copper Cottages had his phone ringing off the hook, mostly people looking for winter homes, vacation rentals and weekend getaways.

Once that rehab project was complete, Michael and his cousin saw another business opportunity in the community. Off road jeep and in town historical golf cart tours, soon Superior Tours / Tierra Rentals was in the works. After extensive permitting and paperwork to the Tonto National Forest, Superior Tours / Tierra Rentals was approved to start operating four wheel drive jeep tours in the Tonto National Forest outside of Superior. Tours include trips to the Silver King Mine, Oak Flat area and tours around Picket Post Mountain.

He enjoys visiting with the all visitors who take the tours.

“They have fun and enjoy learning about the history of our town,” he explained.

Reservations are recommended and if possible a 24 hour notice is appreciated. Reservations for jeep and golf cart tours can be arranged by calling 480-892-5505 or email superiortierra@gmail.com.

These two business endeavors keep Michael busy along with friends, family and his full time career with Resolution Copper, but he still has another project in the works under Superior Main Land llc. He plans to build a two-story commercial retail/restaurant/loft apartment building on Main Street next to the VFW with his partner Karl Obergh (Owner of Ritoch-Powell & Assoc). He isn't sure if he will actually operate a business from the building or if he will rent it to another entrepreneur, but one thing for sure, Michael is full of ideas of for the building. He is determined to see these businesses flourish and ensure that his investments in Superior are worthwhile.

His advice to future and fellow entrepreneurs? “Don't be afraid, follow your passions, take time to sit still and listen... that small voice in your soul is usually whispering you the answers.. Respect and listen to what your elders have to say (*most of the time*), and most important – in the famous words of Martin Luther King Jr. – ‘Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.’”



Mila Besich-Lira (385 Posts (<http://www.copperarea.com/pages/author/mbesich-lira/>))

Mila Besich-Lira is a resident of Superior with two children. She volunteers for many local organizations. She is an experienced fundraiser and event planner for Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition. She covers some of the area town councils and schools.



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