

Businesses weather many storms

Flooding wreaks havoc on several businesses in 2004. Meanwhile, one man wonders if the general public will ever understand his limericks.

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NEW TAMPA

With each passing month, Winifred Bate-Pope moves farther away from her Hunter's Green kitchen as her shampoo business continues to grow.

The 43-year-old former pharmacist, who developed her Nature's Prescription hair products line with her daughter's dry scalp in mind, has a growing staff and is focusing more on production.

"We're up 20 percent in volume as far as what we mail out, and we're receiving twice the number of phone calls," she said.

A public relations representative helped boost her product's visibility. "She does a lot of writing for us," Bate-Pope said. "That's not my area of expertise."

With inquiries and sales skyrocketing, Bate-Pope said she delegates more but is also working harder.

"I spend a lot of my time preparing orders," she said. And she'll soon have to travel. "Our plan is to target the Southeast region, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, so we can hit more of the professional salons and beauty supply outlets," she said. "And I do plan to do some beauty shows, to make sure the products are being demonstrated properly."

Lately she's been too busy with the marketing effort to invest time and money in research and development. But new products are on the way.

"I've got about six or seven brand new formulas, and we hope to roll those out in 18 to 24 months," she said. "Be on the lookout for a new perm-relaxer."