



Chris Nicholson, owner of The Graeagle Lighting Co., stands by his array of unique lighting fixtures. The business specializes in home furnishings including flooring and lighting.

Business shines some light on Eastern Plumas County

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A light bulb turned on for Chris Nicholson, owner of The Graeagle Lighting Co., when he saw the empty red shop in Graeagle.

"On the way to Downieville it just came to me; I'll do lighting," said Nicholson.

Originally from Kirkham, England, Nicholson moved up to the area at the encouragement of a good friend. With a strong background in electrical engineering and construction, Nicholson decided to use his experience to shed some light on the area.

In November 2007 he opened the business, only eight weeks after his drive to Downieville. Nicholson said he didn't know anything about how to start a furnishings store. He had no contact with wholesalers, or knowledge of how to set up a show room. But Nicholson learned how to make it all come together.



This beautiful red Tara chandelier hangs by the window at the shop in Graeagle. Nicholson said he strives to find distinctive lighting fixtures for his business. Photos by Carolyn Carter

Over the years Nicholson expanded his business into more than just a lamp shop.

"This is a one-stop shop," he said. "I can furnish an entire house."

He offers lighting, carpets, wood flooring, blinds and shutters, and will be offering furniture and sofas within the next couple months.

"You normally only find this kind of business in a city," he said, "but people don't have to go to Reno."

Nicholson prides himself on his prices and emphasizes the importance of good service.

"My prices are better. I went to Tahoe last year to the lighting show room there, and I thought, 'Well, either they're ripping people off or I'm too cheap,'" he said.

Along with being a Realtor, Nicholson is also a home furnishings consultant. He said he goes to a house and tells the owners what sort of wiring and lighting would be best for their house after talking to them and examining the place.

"What I give here is the service," said Nicholson. "We all want service when we buy something. We're paying for it but sometimes we're not getting it."

Nicholson said he wants all of his customers to feel comfortable with their decisions to purchase from him. For example, if a person likes



PROFILES IN BUSINESS GRAEAGLE LIGHTING CO.

a floor or table lamp they can take it home and try it out without purchasing it. If they don't like it they can bring it back and he'll try to find something else that will work.

He said people ask him why he didn't just open up shop in the city, but Nicholson said he likes living in a small town.

"I didn't want to live in a city," he said. "I was used to living in a small village for 30 years in England. I'm living the American Dream here in the mountains. There are people working their lives off to retire here, and I'm already here."

Nicholson said he gets the most gratification from helping people choose lighting of distinction for their homes.

"Lighting is art," he said. "It is not just something to read a book by. It should offer

The Graeagle Lighting Co.
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Hours: Wednesday - Sunday 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ambiance in the home. The first thing a lot of people do when they enter a house is look at the light."

Nicholson offers a wide variety of chandeliers, table lamps and floor lamps. He stocks his shelves with hand-blown glass and unique pieces that fill his shop with all different tones of light. He also has two show rooms featuring carpet and window blind samples.

"It takes a lot of pressure off people," he said. "You can come in here, say what you want, give me the key and I'll organize the whole thing."

After his shop expands to furniture he said he'd be able to accommodate for every part of the home, including painting.

"Lighting is an individual thing. It's a personal thing, and that's what it's all about," he said.

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