

Renovated CROSSROADS

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than a grocery store, through its support of schools, organizations and teams in the area. Rob Flecknell, manager says, we are always approached to help with other groups fundraising events, and we always find a way to help. Over the period of a year, through direct donations or by supplying merchandise at cost, the Co-op manager figures he signs off on goods which would retail for approximately \$17,000.00.

He recounts one instance a couple of years ago, when the local schools ran out of budget to buy merchandise for the cafeteria's food program for the last two weeks, CROSSROADS Co-op without hesitation, stepped up to the plate and delivered merchandise to the

school for the entire two week program.

When entering the store customers and members immediately see bright shiny new fixtures for the enlarged bakery and produce sections. As they proceed down the aisle, they come upon much larger and new refrigerated cases for deli, meat and dairy products. In the deli area, Fred Boyd, deli-specialist, is especially proud of the new heated display cabinet for BBQ chickens.

For the first time in Parrsboro, CROSSROADS Co-op will now be selling live lobster. A holding tank has been installed near the produce and meat departments. Rob Flecknell, says the store's expansion, has also helped local suppliers. Local fish and live lobster (in season) will be

available. If the demand is there, Flecknell will find a way to carry live lobster for as long as the demand is there.

Knowing an expanded store was coming, Flecknell started working with other local suppliers. As a result two new suppliers have been recruited, not only for the Parrsboro store, but for the entire Co-op Atlantic network of stores.

Paul and Mike Hanna, Hanna Farms, Parrsboro and Stephen Kernohan, Bellaymena Farm, Parrsboro have also been featured as Local Suppliers in the hundreds of thousands of copies of Co-op Grocery flyers delivered throughout Atlantic Canada. Bellaymena Farm is also a major supplier to Spearville Mills in New Brunswick.

With a growing emphasis on "buying local" Flecknell works hard to source local product as much as possible, but also sees the Co-op's role as helping to facilitate getting local firms into the much larger Co-op Atlantic supplier network.

In the meat department, Eric Brayley, who got on-the-job training as a meat cutter, 26 years ago is proud of the additions to the store and the new and larger display cases for meat products. He feels the additional variety will help encourage people to do more of their grocery shopping locally.

Over in the grocery department, Rick Bowden, assistant manager, has just seen his workload increase. The store now carries an additional 700 items

offering a wider selection to customers. "This is awesome, it's a big step up. It's our second expansion in 8 years", Bowden says.

All 21 employees are aware service counts, and that's one of the reasons, business continues to increase. For those customer's who are elderly, or sick, or don't have transportation, the store offers a delivery service through Tony Melanson's, T&C "M" Taxi. Flecknell and Melanson are working on ways to expand the service to Diligent River, Southampton, Five Islands and 2 Islands in West Bay.

It's not just a delivery service. Customer's call in their order, staff picks off the shelves and T&C Taxi makes the delivery. The customer pays \$3.00 for delivery with the Co-op paying the remainder of the delivery charges.

Flecknell admits a large investment in a down economy is a bold move, but we knew if we wanted to Co-op to grow and be here to offer a competitive service in future years, we had to do it now. He's confident the expanded and renovated store with a larger variety of product will deliver a favourable shopping experience; attract more customers, entice existing members to use the store more frequently.

Like all stores in smaller communities, service is important if they are going to beat back the competition from larger box stores in larger shopping areas. And that is where CROSSROADS staff are focused

offer better service so more of the area's grocery dollar is spent locally. As Tony Melanson

said in another storey, "USE it or LOSE it. We've been preaching that for over 20 years.



Eric Brayley, meat manager at Cross Roads Co-op adds some steak to the display case. Eric has worked there for 26 years. (Rees Photo)



With over 700 additional items in the grocery department, Rick Bowden, assistant manager, has a busy schedule ordering groceries and stocking shelves. Rick, who hails from Port Greville has worked at the co-op for 30 years. (Rees Photo)



Rafe's Construction workers start the walls on the new addition to CROSSROADS Co-op. (Submitted)



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