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September/October 2007

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# Nebraska Food News...

## People... Places... Things...

*This section of the magazine is dedicated to announcing the changes, additions, promotions, etc., regarding members of the grocery industry in Nebraska. We invite members to submit information that can be included in this section.*

**Cubby's** in **Bennington** has taken on a new look. Outside, the new pumps say Cenex instead of Phillips 66 and inside the look is cleaner and brighter. Cubby's is almost a mini-grocery store with its fresh meat department that offers a selection of pork loin, steaks and hamburger, along with all the fixings for a complete meal. Everything is well lit, bright and clean.

**Munson's Market, Inc.**, opened its doors in June. **Stanley** and **Shareen Munson** purchased the former Tryon Rebekah Lodge Hall building last February. After putting in some long hours remodeling, they are open.

**Hoelting Food Mart** closed its doors in July.

The only grocery store south of the tracks in **Kearney** has recently received a makeover. **Boogaarts** has been in business in Kearney since 1965. After 42 years of open doors, the business decided to take on a new look. Boogaarts' new Store Director, **Lance Handley**, said that the main goal of the renovation was to drop the convenience store reputation.

Longtime manager of **Clay Center Market**, **Todd Leininger**, purchased the store from **Alan** and **Mark Brown**. Leininger had managed the store for 16 years.

To celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **McKinney's** had a wild weekend in August serving free lunch to show their appreciation. **McKinney** and his wife **Mary** brought the store to **Gretna** after their lease expired on their

building in Tara Plaza in Papillion.

**Bob Burns** of **Theford**, and **Jeff Peterson** and his fiancée, **Melissa Ekman**, are pleased to announce the opening of **Stapleton Meats & Market**. Formerly **Allen Ewoldt** owned **Ewoldt's Grocery & Lockers**. The new owners will be adding groceries to the meat processing business and continue to rent out lockers.

Neither stroke, breast cancer nor reliance on a wheelchair keeps **Mary Howard** from her appointed rounds. For Howard, that means running a unique general store, café and feed store, **Howard's Grocery**, in this off-the-beaten track Richardson County village. It also means keeping the 25-odd residents of **Barada** constantly on their toes with a feisty sense of humor.

Downtown **Omaha's** limited supply of grocery items will grow this fall, when the owners of a **Blair**, NE store open a full-service grocery in a remodeled art-deco building at 1416 Howard St. **Pat Andersen**, owner of **Blair Superfoods**, plans to open **Patrick's Market** in November in the historic downtown building with two of his children, **P.J. Andersen** and **Amy Anderson-Powell**.

**Larry** and **Redene Temme**, long time residents of the **Petersburg** area, are the new owners of **Rae Valley Market**. The Temmes took over ownership of the store August 1 from **Larry** and **Shirley Henn**, who owned it since September, 1997.

**Ideal Grocery**, which celebrated its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005, is the oldest operating independent grocery store in **Lincoln**. The building, located at 905 S. 27<sup>th</sup> St., was built

in the 1930s and has remained in that spot for long-time customers and newcomers alike. Moore's grandfather founded Ideal Grocery and the family has been involved in its growth ever since. **Moore**, along with seven other partners, has worked to keep Ideal similar to the traditional store it started as.

The deli counter at **Cubby's** is undergoing a metamorphosis courtesy of deli and catering manager **Jerry Meyer**. While fried chicken will probably stick around, other greasy staples such as chicken tenders, gizzards, burritos and potato wedges are endangered species at the Downtown **Omaha** grocer. What's in are reubens, salmon dishes, an assortment of cold salads and other items that may make Cubby's, 601 S. 13<sup>th</sup> St., the ideal spot for food on the go.

**Jeff and Julie Sherwood** of **Holdrege** purchased the **Oxford Super Market** from **Kevin and Sabrina Nielsen**. The couple also own **Nick's Gyros** in **Kearney** and in **Hastings**.

**Mogen Knudsen** of **Lexington** is the owner of a new **Holdrege** grocery store. The **Holdrege Market Place** opened in August at 1419 Burlington, the site of a former grocery store that closed the past November. Mogens also owns **Plum Creek Market** in **Lexington**.

The owners of the **Hometown Market Grocery Store** in **Trenton** and **Benkelman** are continuing to make improvements to their business. **Rob Janousek** of Trenton and **Audie Bundy** of Benkelman are partner/owners of the two stores. Last week they took possession of their new 1989 International refrigerated truck to haul goods between the two stores.

**Gene Peterson** has passed his butcher block on to **Tony Dinh**. For the past 28 years, the downtown **Ceresco** store has been known as **Gene & Jo's Market**. Gene and his wife **Mary Jo Peterson** have owned the store since 1979. This year the couple has decided to retire. Tony has renamed the store **Ceresco Corner Market**.

**Stratton** residents are considering a cooperative to re-open the grocery store closed for three years. Stratton Area Chamber of Commerce member **Bill Zahl** told residents gathered at a community meeting recently the project could cost about \$155,000.

A culmination of several factors have led owners of **DeWitt's Hometown Grocery**, **Kerri** and **Kevin Thornburg**, to decide to close the business as of the end of November.

The **Grand Island Sunmart** grocery store, 3420 State St., will close in October.

**Fairmont** residents **Ivan** and **Holly Davenport** have purchased and re-opened the downtown **Family Market**. Ivan says the locally owned store had closed some 14 months previous.

**Brenda and Gary Bennett** have purchased **Henderson Foodmart**.

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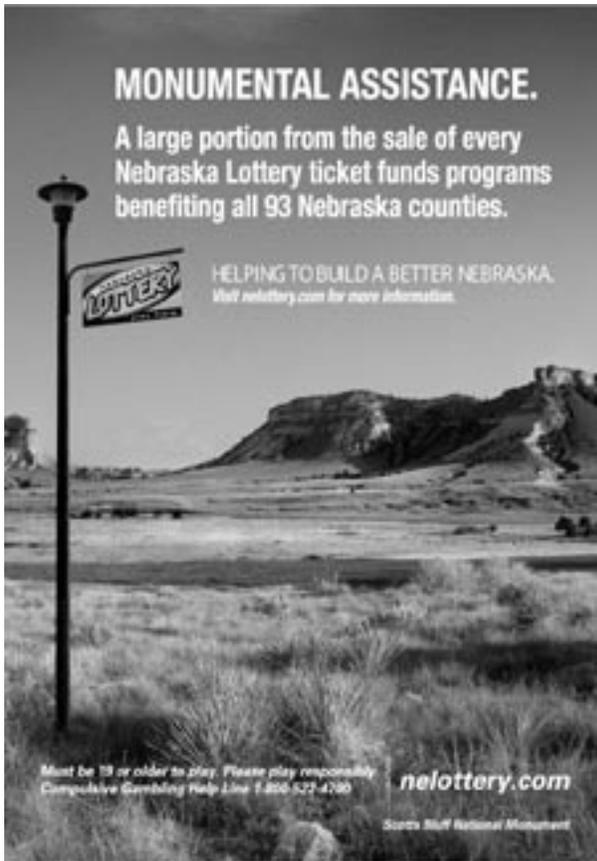
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## Nebraska Grocery Industry Association Annual Conference Highlights



Attorney General  
Jon Bruning accepts  
Speaker gift from  
Pat Hensley



Carl Andersen, Pat Raybould  
and Doug Cunningham greet  
attendees as they arrive



Attendees network during breaks



The room was filled with grocery industry members through the workshops



Speaker Larry Keiter accepts speaker gift  
From Bob DeStefano



Workshop attendees take notes during the seminar

## Nebraska Grocery Industry Association Annual Conference Highlights



Larry Keiter talks with members about their competitive edge



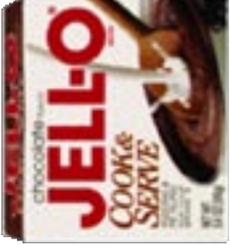
Groups are formed to discuss different ways to compete with big box stores



Rob Bell accepts speaker gift from Kelly Dingwell



Members take a break from workshops to discuss other issues.



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## Chairman's Reception & Dinner Highlights



Larry Baus, Pat Raybould, Mary Nickels and Carol Baus visit during the Chairman's Reception



Bob DeStefano, Jane Raybould, Carla Jarvis and Marty Jarvis enjoy the evening



Mark Harvey, Stan McClintock, Dave Potter And Lonnie Eggers share a brew.



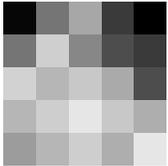
Mike Herrod, Doug Cunningham, Mogens Knudsen and Bob Frady share something humorous in addition to a brew!



Tim King, Tighe Ladd and Bill Wagner enjoy the moment



Dick Cosaert, Maurice Jantze and Bill Ashley discuss issues.



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## Sand Baggers" Golf Outing Highlights

Members played golf at Quarry Oaks. We had no wind, 75 degrees and low humidity. It was a great day to play golf. Players warmed up on the driving range then took off for their tee-box for a shotgun start. First Flight winners were Craig Knavel, John Finders, Hank Martinex and Mark Peotzl; Second Flight winners were Carl Andersen, Kelly Dingwell, Vern Sizenbach and Steve Hopwood; Third Flight winners were Todd Lindhoff, Jim Head, John Peterson and Jeff Nusser. Winners of the Texas Hold 'Em Tournament were Denny Novacek and Tighe Ladd.





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## NGA Spirit of America Award Presented to Family of Larry McCord



Chairman of the Board Maurice Jantze presents the Spirit of America Award to Larry McCord's wife Pat, son Shannon, and daughter-in-law Jenny McCord.

The Spirit of America Award is the most prestigious award presented by NGIA and NGA. There are times when we don't get to recognize individuals for their contributions because we think they will always be around – and we can always thank them later. With Larry McCord, that wasn't the case because he was taken from us early in his life.

Larry was a very active member of the grocery industry. He served as Immediate Past Chairman of our Board of Directors when he passed away. Larry brought a sense of excitement to everything he did because of his willingness to try new things. To leave a legacy you must touch another human life and Larry McCord did that many times over. He helped those less fortunate and gave things that will continue to be remembered . . . a new idea, a joke, or a smile. Larry had the ambition to try new things and the vitality to see them through.

Larry served on the NGIA Board of Directors for 12 years and as Chairman of the Board for two years, from 2000 through 2002. He owned and operated Ideal Market, Superior Auction, Ideal Driving Range, in addition to farming. He was a lifetime member of the American Legion, served on the Nuckolls County Fair Board, Nuckolls County Museum Board, was a member of the Nuckolls County Historical Society, V.F.W., Elks Lodge, Eagles Club, Superior Country Club, Superior Ambassadors, First United Methodist Church, and the American Draft Horse Association.

Larry's father, Russ, established Superior's Ideal Market in 1949. Larry followed his father as the store manager and owner. Larry's son, Shannon and his wife Jenny, are now carrying on the family tradition of running the store.

Larry was involved in many of our food industry activities. He served food to State senators, operated the sound system at our Best Bagger Contest, presented awards, was part of the gang that went to the National Grocers Association Trade Show, ran the par-3 mini tournaments during our golf outings, and generally made many events more fun than they should have been.

Larry's wife Pat, his son Shannon, and his daughter-in-law Jenny accepted the award that was presented in recognition of all that Larry accomplished, the assistance he provided, and the spirit of teamwork for which he was known.

## **Distinguished Service Award Presented to Doug Cunningham**



Doug Cunningham was the recipient of the 2008 Distinguished Service Award. Doug has been a member of the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association for many years and has been very active in all aspects of our industry. His dedication to representing the food industry is evident by his willingness to volunteer to serve on committees, the NGIA Board, and to run for public office. He has made several trips to Washington, DC to lobby on behalf of the food industry in Nebraska. He served the grocery industry by his representation as a Nebraska State Senator. When he was term-limited out of office, he became the full-time Executive Director of Hometown Merchants Association. He now travels to communities throughout the nation, speaking to groups and organizations in his efforts to stem the tide of big box discount stores. We are honored to have him as a member and we thank him for his dedication to our industry.

## **Associate of the Year Award Presented to Dan Potter**



The winner of the Associate of the Year Award was presented to Dan Potter of Arctic Glacier. Dan is one of those people who volunteers just for the fun of it. He brings fresh, new ideas with him and has been indispensable in planning many of our events, including the golf outings, our Legislative Reception & Dinner and Vendor Meetings. He's made himself available to assist whenever the need arises. When he's involved in a project, everyone has a good time. The 2007 Associate of the Year Award was given to Dan as a way to honor him for his willingness to give whatever it takes to get the job done, and his continued support of NGIA and its programs.

# USDA To Provide Energy Grants; Ideal Market Approved for Two Grants

USDA Energy Grant Applications will be coming out in October for 2007-2008. The program is geared toward businesses that are located in areas where the population is 50,000 or less. The Energy Grant focuses on efficiencies that reduce energy costs such as windows, doors, insulation, heating and cooling systems, cases, lighting, etc. The applicant must spend a minimum of \$6000 to receive a grant of \$1500. If the project qualifies, the business will receive 25% of the total grant. USDA will hold workshops in each area to teach people how to apply for the grants and to assist in completing the forms.

Shannon McCord, Ideal Market in Superior, applied for and received grant money for two different projects. The largest project consists of putting in a compressor rack system where all high-end and low-end systems will be run off of the new rack system. The rack system will be in an enclosed, insulated room allowing the heat that is generated to be used to heat the entire store in the winter season. During the summer months the heat will be piped out through the roof for

dispersal rather than being allowed to leak out onto the sales floor. They will continue to pay for the air conditioning in the summer, but they won't have to cool the heat generated from the compressors that now sit in the back room. He estimates the cost will run around \$180,000 by the time it is completed. He will realize a savings of 25% through the grant. He estimates there is a 7 – 9 year payback.

The second project is changing the magnetic ballasts to electronic ballasts. There is a 7 year payback on this project and it will run between \$5000 and \$7000. It will take about a week to remove the old ballasts, rewire, and install the new ballasts and lights.

Applying for the grant is fairly simple. The business applies for the grant. USDA approves the grant. The business completes the work and submits bills indicating the cost of the improvement. USDA remits payment back to the retailer. The grant form will be printed in this magazine once it becomes available, or you may contact Mike Teeter at NPPD in Lincoln (402-362-7323).

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By Memoriam



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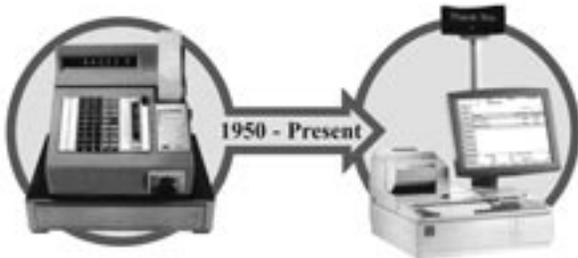
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# That's What We're Thinking!

By T. Scott and Melanie Gross

## **Positively Outrageous Service!**

I knew even before we opened our small restaurant that we would be model franchisees. We would follow the book to the letter. And, just as certainly, we would be the model of success. Wrong.

Sales started out slowly... and then, tapered off from there! We were dying the slow death of a business in trouble. Still, we were getting our share of the pie. It was just that in our market, fair share was not much of a share at all. Doing things by the book may have been enough to satisfy our franchisor but not enough to keep the doors open and the mortgage paid.

In the process of trying to keep the lights on and creditors at bay, I couldn't help notice a few contrarian operators who, in spite of giant flaws such as poor location, unattractive packaging, sometimes non-competitive pricing and even less than expected quality...were doing just fine, thank-you. What was their secret?

It was so secret that when I asked, even they couldn't describe what it was that was bringing customers to their doors. So I began to watch. And take notes. And experiment in our own little business. And we managed to increase sales by nearly half in the next twelve months. We nearly doubled them in the following twelve!

How did we do it? Through an interesting technique for creating relationships with our customers, something we call Positively Outrageous Service.

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- An invitation to the customer to play and, when it's just right,
- Creates compelling, positive word of mouth.

If there is one defining story of POS it has to be what Phil Romano did to kick up sales at his fledgling Italian restaurant on the outskirts of San Antonio. Location was definitely against him in spite of great food and incomparable service. Rather than falling back on the tried and true dinner special and traditional sales discounts, Phil knew that he would have to do his marketing via word of mouth. This was especially so because his one store could never generate enough sales to be "media efficient."

So, once a month, on a Monday or a Tuesday, and totally without warning Phil comped every meal, drink and dessert. Totally free! And boy, did word of mouth kick in!

Today, regardless of the day of the week, it's tough to get near the place!

And when do you think was the last time Phil pulled this stunt? It's been YEARS!

If you had been one of Phil's early customers, you may have remembered to tell someone about the great food. You may have remembered to mention that the entertainment was nice. But it's one hundred percent certain that if you had been a guest on a night when the check went

into the trash, you would have been so blown away that you would have told everyone and his grandmother about Phil Romano's Macaroni Grill. Yeah, that Phil Romano, restaurant genius!

Positively Outrageous Service always involves the element of surprise at least in the sense of being unexpected for the circumstance. Walking into our restaurant one day, our manager said, "Let's do something outrageous."

"Fine. Get some window cleaner and paper towels and get out on the drive-through. You'll know what to do."

And that was only one of dozens of spur-of-the-moment things that we sprang on our customers. Another day, while completing employee evaluations we got the crazy idea of evaluating our regular customers. We created a customer evaluation form and on a random basis evaluated waiting customers on several rather silly attributes advising customers to: a) Please wash your car or truck. It's giving us a bad name; or b) Please wash. You're giving us a bad name! (Of course, we followed up with a complimentary meal to say thanks for allowing us to play with them!)

We often had customers tell us that they weren't really in the mood for our food but felt that they had to check in "just to see what you are up to!"

Positively Outrageous Service can be tender as well as outrageous and it doesn't require that you spend more than a little creativity.

Walking into our store one evening I noticed a box being closed that looked a little unusual. There was bright red writing on the inside of the lid.

"What's that?"

"Mrs. Rogers called in an order and she seemed a little depressed. Soooo," he opened the box so I could read the bright red, Merry Christmas that had been neatly printed on the inside of the lid.

The order was dispatched for delivery. Mrs. Rogers would be in for a double surprise in a matter of minutes when our delivery guy handed her meal and then asked if he could use the phone to call the store.

When the call came in everything stopped in the store while all the employees gathered around the phone to sing a not-so-polished but very appreciated version of We Wish You a Merry Christmas to a startled Mrs. Rogers, one of our many customers for life. (This would have been a better story had it not happened at Easter!).

We weren't the first to discover that playing with your customers, involving them in their own service and marketing, would be the key to establishing a personal relationship that goes beyond simple transactions. We just followed the lead of others who discovered that involving customers creates loyalty that transcends price, product, packaging and place.

Southwest Airlines is famous for doing intuitively what we learned to do on purpose.

Flying from Memphis to Houston the other day a flight attendant recognized me saying.... "Aren't you that positively outrageous guy?"

"As a matter of fact, I am." I replied, pleased to be noticed.

"Would you happen to have one of your books I could give away?"

"Sure!"

I didn't know what would happen. I just knew it would be fun. At thirty thousand feet, the intercom rang out, "Ladies and gentlemen. We're fortunate today to have Southwest Airline's author in residence, T. Scott Gross on board. If you would like to win a copy of his book, Positively Outrageous Service, use the napkin that we are handing out to guess the number of sheets of toilet paper it takes to stretch from the aft lav to the forward lav."

Then, much to the amusement of the customers, a flight attendant came racing down

the aisle unfurling a roll of TP as she went! (The answer is 172 just in case it ever happens to you!)

Now, if that happened to you, would you tell anyone? If you were asked, "How was your flight?" would you mention the TP incident?

You bet you would.

And that's the whole point of Positively Outrageous Service: doing the unexpected, involving your customers and just plain making them say, "Wow."

Of course, talking about POS is one thing. Getting ordinary people to actually do it is quite another. But it can be done. And when you learn to deliver POS several amazing side effects happen. Turnover goes down. Customers are willing to forgive you when you make small

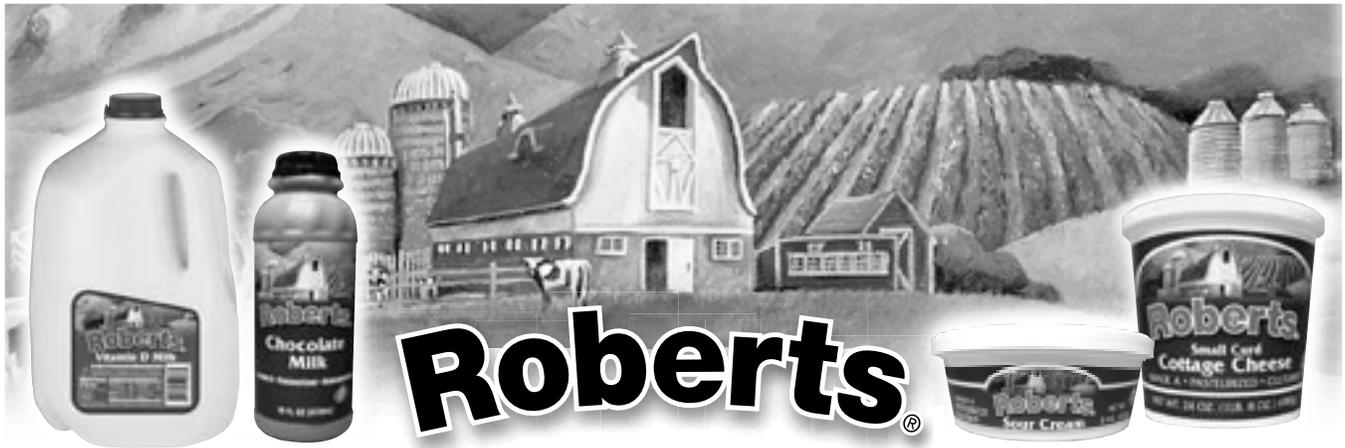
mistakes. You become less vulnerable to price cuts by the competition.

For now, while you are thinking about how POS might fit your operation, ask yourself, "What have I done to surprise and delight my customers lately? What have I done to make them say, "Wow?"

T. Scott Gross is best known as the author of Positively Outrageous Service [www.tscottgross.com](http://www.tscottgross.com) Melanie Gross partners with T. Scott Gross in their various entrepreneurial endeavors bringing new product ideas to life, new concepts to market, and serving as editor for over a dozen books as well as numerous articles and other corporate communications.



An advertisement for Dorothy Lynch Home Style Dressing. It features two stylized labels. The left label is red with a yellow border and contains the text "DOROTHY LYNCH" in a large, white, serif font, with "HOME STYLE DRESSING" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The right label is yellow with a red border and contains the text "DOROTHY LYNCH" in a large, white, serif font, with "FAT FREE" in a blue, sans-serif font on a white banner across the middle, and "HOME STYLE DRESSING" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Below the labels, the text "A Nebraska Tradition..." is written in a large, black, serif font, followed by "Available from a Nebraska Grocer" in a smaller, black, serif font.



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