

# Loss of grocery store causes economic losses

In 2007, Kansas State University faculty working with the university's newly formed Center for Engagement and Community Development identified the closing of local grocery stores, citizens' subsequent inability to access a variety of foods, and economic losses to communities as an emerging issue in the state.

Since that time, 82 grocery stores in the state have closed, according to David Procter, director of the center. And, while many are located in rural areas, urban neighborhoods also are suffering.

Procter, who noted that grocery stores typically anchor community and neighborhood business districts, said the loss of a grocery store affects other businesses, as grocery shoppers might also plan a stop at the local hardware store, bank business or insurance office.

Lost revenue affects an entire community, he said.

After a fire destroyed the grocery store in Onaga, Bob Cole, Pottawatomie County economic development director, said that Onaga was

losing about \$20,000 per year from lost sales tax revenues.

K-State's CECD has hosted three grocery summits in working to address the issue and assist communities seeking to strengthen or re-open a grocery store. A fourth summit is being planned in 2014.

The work is ongoing, and Procter noted that many Kansas communities are capitalizing on strengths, such as offering locally-grown foods and making customer service a priority - strengths that set them apart from big box stores.

Ray's Apple Markets, a family-owned, Kansas-based store that prides itself on offering a variety of health-promoting food and community-based customer service, is an example.

Customer Service is a Family's Priority

For the Floersch family, there's no such thing as a typical day.

As the owners of Ray's Apple Market, a local grocery store serving Manhattan, Mike, Aaron and Tom Floersch strive to provide "modern stores with old-fashioned

service."

The trio is following in the steps of Ray Floersch, the father of Mike and Tom and grandfather of Aaron, who started the business nearly 48 years ago. These grocers work to remain competitive with other chain grocers in town by maintaining relationships with their customers and the local community.

"We were brought up that way," Mike Floersch said. "We think it's a basic; it's a thank you for shopping with us."

The roots of customer service run deep in the family-operated store and are emphasized during employee training and store management. Employees will carry out groceries for shoppers and prioritize conversation with the consumer - two practices the Floersch's say make their store unique.

"We have the eight-foot rule. If somebody is within eight feet of you, you speak to them," Mike Floersch said. "It's what we expect when you come and work for us."

But friendly relationships with customers are only the beginning of

this store's focus on the consumer.

Ray's Apple Market is a full-service grocery store, with a bakery, deli, coffee shop, free Wi-Fi and video kiosk. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the deli provides all-you-can-eat dinner deals, with chicken, ribs and side dishes, as well as daily specials, such as preservative-free salads made onsite.

The store's meat department is also internal, with all of the cuts and packaging taking place within Ray's, Mike Floersch said.

And, if there is a grocery item a customer wants but the store doesn't have, they will special order it for that customer, he said.

The store's services also extend beyond foods, as the Manhattan stores sell Kansas State University and Manhattan merchandise, and offer a dry-cleaning drop-off and pick-up service with a local provider.

Ray's also has hosted events in the store, such as a customer appreciation carnival, free ice-cream social, and "Donuts with Dad" on Father's Day, when children can decorate

donuts with their fathers. The store has also brought in the Easter Bunny and Tow Mater, the truck from the movie "Cars."

While these events are hosted to attract customers, they are also held to thank local customers and "put a little more fun into grocery shopping," Tom Floersch said.

Though the focus is on the customer, attention also is directed toward impacting the community. As the owners, Aaron Floersch said it is easier to make decisions regarding community donations or requests because the request doesn't have to travel to the corporate level in another city.

"We support a lot of things people don't even know about. It's a lot of little things," Mike Floersch said. "We try and stay connected to our customers' needs."

Earlier this month the store provided grocery carts for a food collection event and gave tours of the store to elementary students.

Ray's Apple Markets also uses its deli to assist organizations with fundraising, allowing groups to

take home a portion of the night's profits.

And while features and events are the norm at the store, the family trio prides themselves most in the quality of their groceries, Mike Floersch said.

"We have a passion for the business. We feel like if you put your heart and soul into it and mean what you say, people will return," he said. "We do it the best we know how."

The Floersch family also provides hometown service in a smaller downtown store located in Manhattan, and in Ray's Apple Markets in St. Marys, Clay Center, Seneca, and Council Grove (all in Kansas), and in Fairbury, Neb.

More information about local grocery stores, access to food, and effect on community health is available at Kansas State's Center for Engagement and Community Development at 785-532-6868 and online: [www.ksu.edu/cecd](http://www.ksu.edu/cecd) and, also, on [www.ruralgrocery.org](http://www.ruralgrocery.org).

## 4-H at work



The Randy Berls' family manned the Red Kettle for the Salvation Army at Walmart for the Sunflower 4-H club.

## sunflower 4-h

On Saturday, Dec. 1, members of the Sunflower 4-H Club participated in two Community Service projects. Nine members, three parents and one leader, helped collect food for Genesis. Eleven members, four parents and one leader also participated in ringing the bell for the Salvation Army collection site at Wal-Mart.

*Ryan Berls, Reporter*  
**December**  
 The Sunflower 4-H Club met on Sunday, Dec. 9, at the 4-H building. The members and parents enjoyed pizza and pop for lunch. Parents drove the members to the Good Samaritan Center and Wheat Ridge Acres to sing Christmas

carols. After caroling, everyone returned to the 4-H building for a Christmas party. The members present enjoyed a gift exchange. The next club meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 21.

*Ryan Berls, Reporter*

# Coalition providing grants for youth groups

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition is providing approximately 10 competitive grand awards of up to \$1,000 this spring to assist in engaging youth groups in tobacco prevention and education. The grant project is part of the coalition's continuing support for a statewide youth movement to reduce youth use of tobacco products in communities across Kansas.

"Youth play a unique role that contributes to an effective and comprehensive tobacco control program. Engaging youth, through mini-grants, to develop their own tobacco prevention messaging is a powerful tool to reduce initiation

and the use of cigarettes and tobacco products," says Linda DeCoursey, executive director of the coalition. The coalition competitive mini-grants engage and empower youth groups to create their own projects that speak to the truth about tobacco use and how it affects their peers and communities."

Tobacco use, which still remains a leading cause of death and disease in Kansas, usually begins before the age of 18. With funding from the Kansas Health Foundation, the coalition's mini-grant program offers funding of up to \$1,000 for youth-led tobacco prevention projects that impact other teens at

the community level. Youth from 12-17 within school, prevention, church and social groups, youth coalitions, youth sports and after school programs may apply for the funding by completing a short application.

Grant applications can be obtained on the coalition's website at [www.tobaccofreekansas.org](http://www.tobaccofreekansas.org) or by contacting Erica Anderson, for applications or information at [ericaanderson@tobaccofreekansas.org](mailto:ericaanderson@tobaccofreekansas.org). The deadline for this round of applications is Jan. 15 with the award announcement by Jan. 25.

## January Consultant Schedule

ALLERGIST**	Jeffrey Rumblyrt, M.D.	January 21
CARDIOLOGIST	Barry Smith, M.D.	January 9 & 23
CARDIOLOGIST	Vijay Subbarao, M.D.	January 10
CARDIOLOGIST**	Christine Fisher, M.D.	January 14
COUNSELING SERVICES		Thursdays by Appointment
DERMATOLOGIST	Theodore Alkousakis, M.D.	January 15
DIETITIAN	Sarah Linton, RD, LD, CDE	Tuesdays by Appointment
EARS, NOSE, THROAT	Alfred N. Carr, M.D.	January 17 & 18
GASTROENTEROLOGIST	Jeffrey D. Huston, M.D.	January 8, 21 & 22
GENERAL SURGEON	David D. Beck, M.D.	TBA
GENERAL SURGEON	Jeffrey Cross, M.D.	TBA
GYNECOLOGY	Laura Rokosz, M.D.	January 9 & 30
OBSTETRICS/GYNECOLOGY	David Forschner, M.D.	January 16
ONCOLOGY	Prakash Neupane, M.D.	January 4, 11, 18, & 25
ONCOLOGY/HEMATOLOGY	Martin Rubinowitz, M.D.	January 8
OPHTHALMOLOGIST	Brian Joondeph, M.D.	January 16
OPHTHALMOLOGIST	Ronald Wise, M.D.	January 4, 18 & 23
OPHTHALMOLOGIST**	Eric Fry, M.D.	January 8
OPHTHALMOLOGIST	Robert Fante, M.D.	February 22
ORTHOPEDIST	Tim Birney, M.D.	January 14
ORTHOPEDIST	Armond Hatzidakis, M.D.	February 2
ORTHOPEDIST	James Holmes, M.D.	January 21
ORTHOPEDIST	Edward Parks, M.D.	January 28
ORTHOPEDIST	Raj Bazaz, M.D.	January 14
ORTHOPEDIST	Kevin Nagamani, M.D.	TBA
ORTHOPEDIST	Gareth Shemesh, M.D.	January 10 & 11
PATHOLOGIST	Pathology Services P.C.	Call for Availability
PODIATRIST	Erik Ouderkirk, D.P.M.	January 9
PODIATRIST	Daniel Mallett, D.P.M.	January 23
PULMONOLOGIST	Ken Weisiger, M.D.	December 13 & 20
RADIOLOGISTS	Professional Radiology Services	WEEK DAYS
SPEECH THERAPY	Crystal Schultz	Monday - Thursday
UROLOGIST**	Kevin McDonald M.D.	January 8
UROLOGIST**	Wallace Curry, M.D.	January 22

For an appointment please call 785-890-6030

\*\*For an appointment with the Allergist please call 1-888-849-8424

\*\*For an appointment with Dr. Fry please call 1-800-526-3937

\*\*For an appointment with Dr. Fisher please call 1-888-625-4699

\*\*For an appointment with Dr. McDonald or Dr. Curry please call 1-877-312-1619

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 Saturday Clinic 9-11 a.m.

Dr. Mohedine Shafei (Out of office on Monday)  
 Dr. Travis Daise (Out of office on Wednesday)  
 Dr. David Younger (Out of office on Thursday)  
 Dr. Lisa M. Unruh - Pediatrician (Out of office on Tuesday)  
 Jackie Jorgensen, ARNP (Out of office on Friday)  
 Kathy Wiley, APRN (Out of office on Wednesday)



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