

# Hanover Co-op Opens Fourth Store

BY ALAN REETZ

In late June, Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society opened a 15,000-square-foot facility in White River Junction, Vt., the co-op's fourth food store within a seven-mile radius. The co-op's new store occupies a space left vacant by the bankruptcy of the former owner/operator of P&C grocery stores. Hanover Co-op, founded in 1936, has more than 18,000 active members.

General Manager Terry Appleby credits his staff for helping keep the co-op financially strong and able to take advantage of this opportunity. "We stayed profitable despite the recession and growing competition from chain stores, and now we are on solid footing to increase our services to members and customers."

The co-op's Merchandising and Operations Director, Tony White, added, "As soon as the board of directors gave management the thumbs-up, and we were confident that we had support from our neighbors at the Upper Valley Food Co-op right

around the corner, our crew became very busy very quickly. The tremendous support from town officials and the property owners meant we could start work behind the scenes even before we had a signed lease."

The new store is one mile from the Upper Valley Food Co-op, which specializes in natural foods. The expectation at Hanover is for a balanced relationship between the two stores, with services that are more complementary than competitive. Chain stores in the region have been trying to grab every available space, so this is another victory for cooperatives. Added Appleby, "We'll be speaking directly with local residents and community groups to make sure the store carries products to match their tastes and budgets."

Since opening, the store has been averaging over 1,000 customers per day, and sales are ahead



of projections. Demographically, the customer mix represents the community at large, including customers who rely on EBT assistance. White noted, "We've signed up over 375 members in the past four weeks. People continue to thank us for bringing them this store and comment how amazed they are by the way the co-op responds to their needs and requests." ■

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