

BEACON SYSTEM KEEPS ‘THE STOP THAT KEEPS YOU GOING’ COOL

READING, MASS., October 1999 -- Nearly 50 years ago Vasilios and Aphrodite Haseotes took the business acumen and common sense that had built their successful dairy business and applied it “on the road.”

A new retail phenomenon was starting to dot the American landscape, and the Haseotes opened the first convenience stores in New England under the Cumberland Farms name. They believed that if they combined high quality, low-priced merchandise with clean stores and courteous, efficient employees at stores situated in convenient, accessible locations that consumers would be drawn.

They were right. In the ensuing half-century Cumberland Farms has opened more than 1,000 retail stores and gas stations, and support systems including petroleum and grocery distribution operations in communities throughout New England, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Florida. The primary business originally was staples such as bread, milk, soda and potato chips. In fact, Cumberland Farms processed its own milk and baked its own bread for years.

Millions of customers every day stop for coffee, gasoline, newspapers, snacks or cold drinks and a friendly greeting from the Cumberland Farms associates. Cumberland Farms, which is headquartered in Canton, Massachusetts, is “the stop that keeps (them) going.”

Keeping the food and beverages properly refrigerated is critical to the ongoing success of Cumberland Farms. Marino Sarno, as a divisional maintenance manager for Cumberland Farms’ in Reading, Massachusetts, oversees maintenance operations for all stores in New Hampshire, Maine and northeastern Massachusetts.

“Cumberland Farms is split into five divisions,” says Sarno. “Each of the five general managers covers a territory, and under them they have three or four regional managers who lead the stores’ sales managers. I’ve been in the business for 50 years, and with Cumberland Farms for about 13 years. There are about 200 stores in my division.”

With so many stores to oversee, Sarno routinely checks store systems. For that reason, he was interested in discussing new system possibilities with Tom Allen, a sales engineer for Climate Control for the region that covers New England from Allen’s base in Springfield, Massachusetts.

“Climate Control was able to show Marino and Brian Tremblay, director of store engineering for Cumberland Farms, some good energy savings with the Beacon system,” says Allen. “Marino is a guru of refrigeration. He loved the system and saw the potential of a well-engineered system.”

Sarno said that originally the sole purpose of the meeting “was to test the refrigeration

equipment. I have had a good relationship with Climate Control for many years. I read the Beacon literature and said, 'I want to take a shot at this.' My main concern was to eliminate service calls, which cost a lot of money.

"The first Beacon system was actually installed at one of our stores in Danvers, Massachusetts back in 1997," adds Sarno. "I asked our service personnel at Cumberland Farms to purchase one through Johnstone Supply."

Cumberland Farms contacted Glenn Amore, whose Johnstone Supply Company branch is located in West Warwick, Rhode Island and services Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. "We've been with Climate Control for about 10 years now," says Amore. "We got the bid for the Cumberland Farms business and, after they used the Beacon equipment for a while they found it was in their best interests to switch over to Beacon."

Sarno says that Cumberland Farms decided to convert its Danvers store from a water-cooled unit to a 3-horsepower (HP) Beacon system. "The Danvers store is 20 years old and about 1,200 square feet," says Sarno. "Our average new store is 3,000 to 4,000 square feet. I use the old formulas based on the cfm -- cubic feet per minute, the force of the air that is blowing. We run at 34 degrees. Most of those glass doors are really packed, but we find variation inside the coolers.

"We set up the evaporators to blow on the doors," adds Sarno, "and we've got the number of doors one evaporator can handle down to a science. So, the installers know that one evaporator coil can cover four or five doors."

Sarno says that the Beacon system maintains constant control. "Flashing lights on the control board will tell you what's wrong with the system," he says. "We have alarms connected to the Beacon system, too."

Allen says that Cumberland Farms purchased Climate Control 3HP condensing units with matching low-profile evaporator coils. "The condensing unit utilizes a hermetic compressor outdoor condensing unit," says Allen. "The matching coil is a low-silhouette, 2-fan with PSC motors configured for Cumberland Farms."

Allen says that Cumberland Farms has installed Climate Control Beacon systems in a number of stores, "typically about 50 per year. We've now expanded the Beacon system to include the southern portion of New England."

In most of the locations, says Sarno, "evaporators are located inside the cooler on the back wall. There are 15 to 20 doors in the new stores, so we put in two 3-horsepower systems with four evaporator coils, at 10,000 btuh each. Condensign units are located on the roof, or sometimes on the ground, wherever the best location is."

Allen and Climate Control are delighted to have the opportunity to work with a growing number of Cumberland Farms outlets. Cooling "the stop that keeps you going" is an

honor for any company. After all, the credo of the Haseotes never goes out of date -- and fresh service is every bit as important to customers as fresh bread, fresh milk or a quick gasoline fill-up.

Keeping convenience 'cool' is good for Cumberland Farms and good for Climate Control both.