

BizSnaps

A Snapshot look at local businesses



Your Name: Tom Carlson (wife Linda)
Title: Owner & Janesville Native
Business Name: Fairview Florist, Inc.
Address: 1634 E. Racine St.
Phone: 608-755-7700 800-643-9660
Directions: Exit 175A from I-90 Hwy Business
11 & 14 Half mile west Palmer Park
Business Hours: M-F 8-5; Sat 9-1; Sunday-Closed

When was the business started? As a greenhouse 1875circa; Rock County Historical Society 1890; Parents joined partnership 1927

Describe your products / services: Full Service Florist, Patio/Deck/Sunroom Furniture, Garden Annuals/Vegetables, Artificial Christmas Trees

What product, service or philosophy differentiates you from your competitors? Professional florists are not competitors! *Quality:* you get exactly what you pay for. *Service:* this week a customer from 1988 was able to get new cushions for the patio set I sold them 21 years ago. The customer's needs are more important than my needs.

How did you get interested and/or started in this business? Home-schooled in business, I was raised in the Great Depression when every member of the family pitched in.

What kind of training or background do you have? From grade school to high school I've been involved with the family business.

What have you learned from this business? Customers respect honesty and quality.

What are your future plans for your business? My future is now, tomorrow may not come. So last January we launched a new marketing program described as Flowers For Fundraising. This will enable us to tap into the national market via the Internet. Fairview affiliates with non-profits, charities and school booster clubs. They put a link on their website that points to Fairview and for every flower order coming from their organization, Fairview donates \$3 to their cause. Families have relatives and grandparents who live in Florida, can send flowers to Maine. For every 1,000 orders, Fairview gives back to the community \$3,000.



To accomplish our objectives we own several domains, but namely: www.FlowersForAGoodCause.org and www.SchoolSpiritFlowers.org. We have over 20 organizations who are working with Fairview Florist. When Fairview is able to donate our first \$10,000 back into the community I will feel like I have been successful. After 82 years, the Carlson name is the 2nd oldest family retail still in business in Janesville.

What or who has had the most influence in the way you do business? My Dad cautioned me; "It took 6 months to grow that plant, don't you damage it in 6 seconds."

Do you have a favorite saying that applies to your business? On the humorous side: "Business is blooming" Seriously: "If mountains were smooth, I couldn't climb them."

What have been some of the challenges you've faced and how did you work them out? The longest strike in auto/labor history taught me to never quit. Today it's not how the local economy will impact Fairview, it's about how will Fairview impact the local economy.

What do you find most rewarding about this type of work? People who like flowers and plants are beautiful, honest and appreciative people, "salt of the earth."

What type of customers use your products / services? People who are caring, unselfish, and appreciative of quality and service.