

Hillsdale and Multnomah Village businesses have healthy holiday season

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand and Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

It's been a robust holiday season for neighborhood businesses according to local business association sources.

Paloma Clothing sales increased 7.5 percent over 2013.

"Golden Ticket sales and Small Business Saturday promotions contributed to the shop's success," said Paloma owner Mike Roach. He's also the chair of the Hillsdale Business and Professional Association.

The newest Hillsdale business, Gigi's Café, located in the Hillsdale shopping center, seems to have had a great first few months, said Roach. "There are people eating at all hours of the day."

"Barring any major weather events," Roach said, "I'm cautiously optimistic that the holiday season could produce some very solid gains."

Roach also spoke to *The Post* about two other businesses: a credit union that is under construction as well as a grocery market that has been struggling.

"OnPoint Community Credit Union, is the only credit union in Southwest Portland," (barring Downtown) Roach explained. "The foundation was poured during the dry fall weather." The work is on schedule to be completed in early summer.

Two other businesses will set up shop in the same building with OnPoint but they haven't been finalized yet.

"On the downside," Roach sighed. "Food Front has been struggling."

Members of the Hillsdale business association recently brainstormed ways to help out the business.

"This customer owned co-op has to compete with New Seasons, Fred Meyer, and other large [grocery] chains," Roach stated. "We're trying to come up with a variety of ideas."

Golden Ticket program a huge success for local businesses

Randy Bonella, executive director of the Multnomah Village Bloc's Initiative, created the Golden Ticket program in 2009.

"We had over 36,000 tickets out in circulation," Bonella explained, "but we are just getting into the heaviest two weeks of the shopping season."

Bonella said that the Golden Ticket redemption is down about 10 percent from last year at this time but up 27 percent from 2012.

"However," Bonella continued, "a number of businesses are reporting record sales and most are very happy with 2014 holiday season so far."

"Last year's program was off the wall, fantastic," he said.

"My expectation is that the Golden Ticket program will be down slightly from 2013," Bonella predicted, "but nonetheless, it should be very successful for Multnomah Village and Hillsdale."

Average redemption rate overall has been around 20 percent over the years. Beaumont and Clinton/Division business associations have adopted programs similar to Bonella's, but they are still in their infancy.

Venture Portland, the alliance of Portland neighborhood business associations, coordinates promotions with approximately 20 business districts around town, partnered with Little Boxes (a Small Business Saturday event).

According to Venture Portland executive director, Heather Hoell, "Portlanders can feel good knowing their money is staying home for the holidays. For every dollar spent at a local business, 70 percent stays in the local economy."

Hoell said Venture Portland's goal is to ensure the season is merry and bright for local retailers. In Portland, where 98 percent of neighborhood businesses have five or fewer employees, supporting small is really big.

"We appreciate the support of our community by shopping at our local small businesses," Bonella added. "By keeping our businesses strong and healthy, we keep our community strong and healthy."

Renner's Grill celebrates 75th anniversary

Last month, Renner's Grill, an institution anchored in the heart of Multnomah Village for decades, held its 75th anniversary party.

All day long and into the evening, regulars, guests, and long-time customers celebrated the milestone. They were welcomed by the new co-owner, Steve Potter, a former employee.

According to Potter, all proceeds from the anniversary festivities went to Neighborhood House charities. Some may know Potter as the bingo announcer on Wednesday nights.

"We raised approximately \$400," reported Josh Harthill, the manager, and most recently, the other co-owner. "We sold a lot hot dogs and beers for 75 cents."

Renner's Grill was established in 1939 after Milo and Bessie Renner acquired the property and business formerly known as the Cry Baby Café. After several years, they added the second floor known as the Suburban Room Lounge. Steve Langton owned



The Rose City Mixed Quartet performs a cappella inside Switch Shoes and Clothing during the Dec. 5 Holiday Gala in Multnomah Village. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

the bar for many years.

Marshall Meadows, former chef of the Trianon Restaurant, restored the bar to its former glory after Langton died in 2004, and then sold it just recently.

"Breakfast is back," announced Harthill while changing some music on the compact disc player. "We haven't had breakfast here in over seven years."

Legend has it that Milo Renner was Multnomah's first millionaire. Renner's Grill is open daily from 7 a.m. - 2:30 a.m. and is located at 7819 SW Capitol Hwy.



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