

THE COUNTRY STORE

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ness fair and the weekly Hillsdale Farmer's Market also take place but Hillsdale wants to find other reasons for customers to come and stay.

As for holiday time, the business association hasn't had holiday themed event for quite some time. No Santa, no holiday lights, no events.

"The community didn't support it unlike Multnomah Village," Baack said.

Multnomah Village holds its annual Multnomah Days each August, a holiday gala the first weekend of December, and trick or-treating on Halloween. These and First Fridays seem to cement Multnomah Village as a destination place with traditions.

Mike Roach, co-chair of the Hillsdale business association, said Hillsdale tried for about a year to hold a Third Thursday. It was suspended the following winter and the business members could not generate the energy to start it again in the spring.

"We just did not have enough retailers or restaurants in Hillsdale to make a go of it," Roach said.

"It should be noted, as well, that Hillsdale began its blueberry pancake breakfast 41 years ago when very few business districts had annual events. Even Multnomah Days had not happened for a number of years until it was resumed in the 1980's after many years of not hold-

ing one."

Jill Crecraft, owner of Sip D'Vine, attends the Hillsdale meetings. She recounted how long it took Multnomah to succeed with their First Friday event.

"It took a lot of work and time," Crecraft said. "We had to have buy-in from business members." Merchants incur a variety of extra costs such as discounts, keeping employees later, and providing wine and cheese and other delicacies.

"We have our Sunday Farmers Market," Roach said. "It continues to thrive and it will make for a vibrant business district of which we can be proud."

Food Front grocery store director shares insights

Food Front Cooperative Grocery in Hillsdale has had a new store director for eight months. Grace Morgan took over the reins this past February from the previous manager, John Conlan.

"I've been with the co-op since 2013," Morgan said. "I was the meat and seafood manager for the Hillsdale store and our other location in Northwest Portland."

Morgan has been a veteran of natural grocery stores since 2004. She said that there are no new plans for the Hillsdale store in the near future.

"Right now we are focusing as a company on stabilizing sales at both locations," Morgan said. "We have

had a lot of turnover in the past year in upper management. In one year alone, the store went through four general managers alone.

"We were also recovering from the strong hit in sales after the opening of a New Seasons market just five blocks away from the Northwest location."

Morgan said that the company is focusing on being a strong community-involved organization to distinguish itself from the competition.

Hillsdale Food Front has been open just shy of a decade but the original Food Front has been open for 45 years. According to Morgan, it was the first co-op in Portland.

"Although anyone can shop at our stores, most of our sales are comprised of people who hold a share and 'own' part of the co-op."

Morgan said that she has a huge passion for locally sourced food and has been heavily involved in helping many local ranchers get their businesses up and running and into the Portland market. Some of the ranches she mentioned include Lan-Roc



Grace Morgan is store director of Food Front Grocery Co-op in Hillsdale. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Farms, Hawley Ranch, and Wilder Land & Sea.

Morgan is also a journeyman butcher, and has occasionally held private community workshops in everything from whole carcass breakdown, at-home butchery, and sausage making.

Food Front is located at 6344 SW Capitol Highway in the Hillsdale Shopping Center. The co-op is open daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.


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