Gas station a success story for local man

Pumping gas may not sound like the culmination of a success story, but to Angelo Turra, it is getting close.

"You always hear the story of the immigrant coming to America, working hard and striking it rich," says Turra.

"Well, I may not be striking it rich, but I am working hard."

Turra, who came from Italy 13 years ago, recently purchased J.J. Fox's Arco in Brightwood. His partner in the venture is Mike Sofich of Sandy.

An avid skiier who still coaches part time, Turra met his wife, Vicki, while she attended a university in Italy and he was serving on the Italian Border Patrol. He skied throughout the Alps for his three-year tour of duty.

Although educated as a mechanical draftsman, Turra first found work as a ski instructor when he came to the United States. After a short time, he found work in the construction industry.

After several years "apprenticeship" he soon found himself running jobs for his employer and decided to start in the business of framing houses on his own.

Turra graduated to building custom homes and that was his sole business until construction came to a virtual halt several years ago.

He is also part owner of the Western Alley building in Sandy.

Turra and Sofich do not plan to keep the station just to sell gasoline. According to Turra, they hope to serve Cherryville and Marmot area farmers with a feed store and sell hay from the location. Sofich has a farm equipment business and they may expand into that line.

For now the plan is fixing up the station, with new pumps coming next week.

Turra says the station is at a good location and he expects to do well there. He has already lowered gas prices in hopes of attracting new customers.

"We plan on keeping the price as stable as we can," says Turra.

Most exterior repairs will have to wait for better weather, but Turra says they will be working to improve the station every way they can.

"When you take something on, you have to make it work," he says.

Angelo Turra in front of his newly-purchased station.

Martin Stone and brother Rick, the new president of SAM.

Bazaar Sunday in Boring

The Hoodview Seventh-day Adventist Junior Academy in Boring is hosting its Christmas bazaar Dec. 4 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information call 663-4568 or 668-4427.

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SAM president wants unity

Rick Stone, the new president of the Sandy Area Merchants (SAM), defines the job of its members in one sentence: "We have to educate our retail area that Sandy is open for business."

Stone took over as president of SAM two weeks ago. He took the job feeling he could apply experience he gained in a similar position with the Gresham Boosters during the '60s.

He said the Gresham area was facing a similar situation with shopping centers being built outside the main core of business.

Stone feels the downtown merchants in Sandy have a chance to avoid the problems that have developed in Gresham from too-rapid growth.

Stone, in the '50s, watched as his father and a competing merchant went to the trouble of crossing the street to avoid each other.

In Sandy, he wants it to be different. When competitors in Sandy get together they don't have to talk shop, but they do need to talk about how to get people to shop downtown.

"If downtown is viable, then the shopping center will just draw more people to the area," said Stone.

But getting people from competing businesses together, Stone knows, is no easy trick. He said, "It's like walking a tightrope, like walking on eggs."

In the past, SAM — an organization of retailers belonging to the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce — and the local Chamber have clashed. Stone sees the Chamber as the theory of how things should work and SAM as the business application of that theory. "The two kind of parallel each other," said Stone, who expects no problems working with the Chamber in the coming year.

Stone said he has some ideas for promotions, and added that he wants to get merchants together to talk. When he says talk he doesn't mean socialize. He wants prices downtown to be competitive and services good. "I want it to be very comfortable for people to shop in Sandy," he said.

Cleaning up the areas people see is an immediate goal. Giving Sandy an image is an idea he wants to consider, but at the same time weighing the costs.

"We need to discuss it and come up with an idea we can afford," he said.

He emphasizes working with civic groups to improve Sandy's image and cautions against trying to do too much too fast.

"You have to crawl before you can walk or run," he said.

Timber income up 20 percent

Payments to western Oregon counties for their share of timber income from O&C revested lands increased 20 percent over the last fiscal year's figures, according to BLM Oregon-Washington state director William G. Leavell.