

# Keizer Florist set to reopen March 2

By **CRAIG MURPHY**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Car after car pulled into the parking lot of the flower shop both Feb. 13 and 14, with regular customers getting out to buy flowers for Valentine’s Day. Except there were no flow-ers to be bought at Keizer Florist.

Lisa Vasquez and her husband Rich bought the business from Julie Wallace earlier this year, with the sale closing on Feb. 4. Lisa is busy getting things up and running for a re-opening on March 2. The store closed shortly before Christmas.

The new opening date means Keizer Florist was closed for Valentine’s Day – traditionally the busiest day for a flower shop.

“It was torture,” Lisa said of not having flowers to sell. “For so many of the people, for years they pull up and pick up flowers for Valentine’s Day. I lost count of how many people came up and saw the store was closed.”

With the sale closing short-ly before the big day, Lisa said

there wasn’t time to get things like taxes, flower accounts and a myriad of other details arranged in time.

“We didn’t want to open when we weren’t ready,” said Lisa, who noted she has hired three of the store’s former employees. “All of these things have to happen before you can start. Last Friday was the worst. It was the same on Saturday. People didn’t see the signs and just came up to the door. There wasn’t much I could do. Whenever we saw them pull up, I would open the door and greet them.”

If there was a silver lining, Lisa found out something about her customer base.

“My belief is there’s a large, loyal following,” she said. “Most people said they would be back. That made me feel good. I will have to do something nice for the loyal people who come back. A lot of the loyalty is due to the staff that was here.”

An information technology consultant whose husband is retired, Lisa has always been on the lookout for business op-

portunities.

“I have always been pushing to own my own business,” she said. “This wasn’t on my list, to own a floral shop.”

Lisa saw an ad on Craigslist in early January about the business being for sale, then soon met with Wallace and her re-al-tor.

Lisa and Rich, who moved to Keizer in 1996, had some familiarity with the business. Rich became a regular customer shortly after that and got to know previous owners. Once the opportunity came up, it was Lisa pushing forward.

The couple will be an FTD florist, while also selling local flowers. In the days since the sale, they have been getting up to speed.

“Rich has been reading up on FTD systems,” Lisa said. “He will be our driver at first. He will be the support system. The business side I have down. I’ve been a government employee and I worked for two large companies, but I have to be schooled on flower arrange-ments. My team will school me. I can be trained on the job

or FTD offers courses. They have courses on the business side, classes on how to arrange flowers and they have webi-nars. FTD has been around for a long time, so I’ll take advantage of that.”

In talking with her team, Lisa has decided not to continue the drive-through coffee window.

“They did coffee and baked goods, but the team said it was slow,” she said. “It was a lot of effort, so we’re not going to keep it. I told them to just focus on awesome flowers. There is a higher expectation here (for flowers), because you will pay more. I want it as close to perfection as a human can get.”

In addition to flowers, other items like vases, truffles, small gifts and cards will be available. Eventually Lisa wants to give the store at 631 Chemawa Road NE a more contemporary look.

“The real point is the flow-ers,” she said.

One focus for Lisa will be different price ranges.

“I want to focus on afford-ability,” she said. “I want to



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy  
Lisa Vasquez is the new owner of Keizer Florist on Chemawa Road NE.

have it where a customer can still buy something nice even if they don’t have a lot of money to spend. We will run the gamut. That is very important here because this is a working community, not a luxury community. I don’t want people to come in and not be able to buy

anything.”  
Along those lines, Lisa has a picture in mind of the perfect customer.  
“I look forward to the first time a little kid comes in with change and wants to buy a flower for mom,” Lisa said. “That will be the best sale.”

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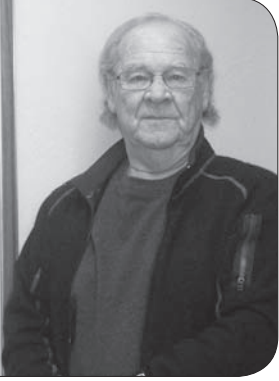

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