

# Family sells Heller & Sons to Carson Oil

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR



Jade McDowell/Hermiston Herald

**Heller & Sons in Hermiston has been sold to Carson Oil.**

Longtime Hermiston business Heller & Sons Distributing will be losing the Heller name after the family sold the business to Carson Oil.

Mike Heller said his father, Glea Heller, originally worked for a petroleum distributor in Milton-Freewater before buying a distribution business in Hermiston and moving the family there in 1957.

“He started with one truck, and we sold 500,000 gallons in a year,” Mike said. “Now we do 500,000 in less than two weeks.”

Heller & Sons provides a range of services, including weekly deliveries of fuel, fuel recycling, lubricant support, various aviation fuel services and five Pacific Pride cardlock stations. The company also runs a gas station and convenience store at 30 W. Catherine Ave.

Mike and his brother, Jim Heller, grew up around the business and joined officially when they were older. They have carried on running it since their father died in 1990, and have had help from other family members through the years.

Mike said the Heller siblings are getting older, though, and fuel distribution has mostly been taken over by much larger companies, so they “saw the writing on the wall” and started discussing retirement.

“The business itself is changing,” he said. “It’s a bit

like farming. The little guys are not there anymore. The big boys are taking over.”

He said he has known Lance Woodbury, president of Carson Oil, for a long time, and he and Jim eventually decided after significant due diligence that Carson Oil would be the best company to take over serving Heller & Sons’ customers. The sale was finalized on May 1, but the Heller brothers are still on board for now to help with the transition.

Mike said many Heller & Sons customers have been with the business since it first started in 1957, and he will miss talking with them regularly.

“The customers have just been wonderful,” he said. “That’s the thing I’m going to miss the most, is working with them and taking care of them.”

Mike said he will also miss working with employees, some of whom have been with the company for 20 years.

He will also miss the community involvement. Heller & Sons has always

been a significant contributor to community projects, and the company was named Hermiston Business of the Year at the 2014 Distinguished Citizens Awards. The business has been one of the core sponsors of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo and its name is prominently displayed on the donor walls of projects around Hermiston, including Kennison Field. When a customer at the convenience store won an \$18 million lottery prize in 2001, Heller & Sons donated most of its \$100,000 award to local schools.

Mike said Carson Oil plans to continue to participate in the community. The business’ distribution trucks already say Carson Oil, and at some point the gas station and convenience store will too, but he said people still can expect the business to look largely the same, including some of the same employees.

“It’s been a long run, and I’m going to miss it a lot,” he said. “It’s going to be tough to walk out that door for the last time.”

# Maxwell Market kicks off summer season

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Veronica Delgado helps customers at her booth, Veronica’s Fresh Produce, at the Maxwell Market in Hermiston on Thursday, May 27, 2021.**

Area growers and crafters were showing off their wares Thursday, May 27, on the opening day of the Maxwell Market.

For Diana Bork of Irrigon, it was her first time at the market as a vendor instead of a customer. Her table featured a variety of jars and plastic bags full of colorful freeze-dried candies under the label Diana’s Freeze Dried Goodies.

“I’ve been freeze-drying things for about five years, and candy became something that everyone loved,” she said.

The freeze-drying process uses extremely low temperatures in a vacuum to remove all the moisture from a food, preserving it. Bork said freeze drying candy intensifies its flavor. It also gives the candy a different texture. Freeze-dried gummy worms at Bork’s table, for example, had a crunch similar to biting into a Cheeto. She cautioned if people are planning to eat a bag of freeze-dried candy, “you’re gonna need a drink of water.”

Freeze driers retail at about \$2,000 to \$3,000 apiece, so Bork said it’s not something people can easily make at home. But freeze-dried foods can stay good for up to 25 years.

Nearby, Cecilia Lopez of Hermiston had set up a table for Cecilia’s Arts and Crafts. Her crafts ranged from custom-made mugs



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald  
**Dieleka Kone, of Kennewick, sells homemade, organic, chemical-free skincare products made with shea butter at Segou Shea.**

to painted succulent pots, complete with a live succulent. She said it was her second year at the market, and she was glad to be back.

“Everyone is friendly, and the community can get together and have some fun,” she said.

Veronica Delgado of Pasco echoed the same sentiments, and said she loved

getting to talk to people while at her booth, Veronica’s Fresh Produce. She has been at the Maxwell Market since its first summer under a tent across the road from its current location at the Maxwell Pavilion.

On May 27 her table included fresh garlic, asparagus, cilantro, radishes and more. She said the selection will change as new crops are harvested.

Next to Delgado was the Segou Shea booth, run by Dieleka Kone of Kennewick. Her business sells homemade, organic, chemical-free skincare products made with shea butter and other natural ingredients.

She said she started the business after she had trouble finding a skincare product that she liked.

The farmer’s market will run every Thursday through Oct. 7, from 4-8 p.m. at the Maxwell Pavilion at South First Place and West Orchard Avenue.

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