

Osborne's Agway has all you need to celebrate spring

BY DONNA RHODES
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BELMONT — As residents of the Lakes Region welcome the return of Spring this year, they can now find everything they need to go out and enjoy the nice weather with gardening, outdoor projects, animal care and even some backyard relaxation, thanks to the new Osborne's Agway Farm and Garden Center in Belmont.

Owner Paul Osborne is no stranger to the farm and garden supply business, having owned and operated Osborne's Agway in Concord for the past ten years and his Hooksett store for the past 15 years. When he looked to develop a third location, he said he was pleased to find the property on Route 3 in Belmont.

"This has been a great town to work with, and I like this location. Everything's going well," Osborne said.

While the doors of the new farm and garden center first opened on April 1, a Grand Opening celebration was held at all three locations last Saturday, offering customers special prices on many items, as well as door prizes, free giveaways and a little entertainment. Customers in Belmont were also encouraged to visit their



Paul Osborne, owner of the newest Osborne's Agway Farm and Garden Center in Belmont, poses with Beth Frost amidst some of the wonderful furniture, food and decorative items now available in their New Hampshire Country Store, located behind the main Agway building and greenhouse on Route 3 in Belmont.

new "country store." The charming shop can be accessed by a short stroll under a covered walkway, which winds amongst the hundreds of flowering plants on sale behind the main building and greenhouse.

"We wanted to tie the two buildings together, and this walkway was a nice way to do that," Osborne said.

Inside the shop are home and gift-giving items like elegant patio furniture, wooden rockers, Salmon Falls Pottery and Hog Hill Pottery of Andover, cards, artwork and locally themed

antique-looking wooden signs. Wind chimes, stained glass and many eye-catching decorative items for both indoors and out are also on sale.

The country store offers food items, too, and Osborne's has shelves filled with pickled eggs, relishes, maple syrup, Camp Mix all-in-one seasoning, and other canned and dry goods. There is even raw milk, cheeses and local eggs in the coolers.

"We have a commercial kitchen downstairs, and soon, we'll be selling pies and other baked goods in



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Besides grains, animal care products, outdoor clothing and lawn supplies, Osborne's Agway in Belmont has a greenhouse filled with beautiful plants and lawn ornaments. Behind the greenhouse, a covered walkway leads to a country store for other home or garden needs and wants.

here, too," he said.

Preparing all of those delicious treats will be Debbie Cousineau, who is known as "AbracaDebra" for the magic she works in the kitchen.

In the front store are all one would expect in a farm and garden center. From grains, incubators, cages and fencing to dog, cat and equine supplies, the store is stocked with aisles of items for animal care. Seeds, bulbs, planters, fertilizers and decorative wrought

iron hooks will keep the gardeners well supplied, too. The greenhouse and garden center out back are filled with fountains and ornamentation along with many beautiful selections of flowers and shrubs.

Osborne's also offers a line of Carhartt clothing and footwear, and for the little outdoorsman in your life, there is a great selection of collectible miniature tractors, front end loaders, school buses and other fun toys made by Ertl.

"We really are so much more than just a grain store," Osborne said.

The store is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m., from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sundays. Osborne's Agway Farm and Garden Center is located on Route 3 just east of Mosquito Bridge in the Winnisquam area of Belmont. More information on all they have to offer can also be found at www.osborne-sagway.com.

SCORE Lakes Region to host financing workshop

LACONIA — Understanding how and what to be prepared for before approaching a lender is especially important to business owners during these challenging economic times.

On Wednesday, May 16, SCORE Lakes Region will offer answers during a workshop entitled "Bank Financing for New or Existing Businesses."

Sponsored by the Bank of New Hampshire (formerly Laconia Savings Bank), W. Stephen Loughlin, Senior Vice President, Laconia Savings Bank, will share his expertise. Steve has been a commercial lender in the Lakes Region for more than 30 years

with lending experience to large and small businesses. Loughlin graduated from St. Bonaventure University, and from Stonier Graduate School of Banking. He is active in the Laconia Kiwanis Club.

Discussion topics during this session include:

- How to prepare before approaching a lender;
- Conditions that affect the decision making process;
- What documents are necessary to approach a lending institution;
- How the current economic climate affect business loans.

Registration is required for the May 16 workshop, which

will be held from 5 – 8 p.m. at the Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, 383 South Main St., Laconia, NH 03246. Tuition is \$25 per person if paid in advance or \$30 at the door. Checks may be sent to SCORE Lakes Region, 383 South Main St., Laconia, NH 03246. To register, call SCORE Lakes Region at 524-0137 or register online at <http://lakesregion.score.org/localworkshops>.

SCORE Lakes Region is a not-for-profit, volunteer organization and Small Business Administration resource providing no cost small business counseling, mentoring and coaching for the life of your small business.



COURTESY

Rustic Raven finds a new place to nest

Tracy Mertz, owner of Rustic Raven, has chosen the Belmont Village Store to 'nest' her business in! Specializing in baked treats like cookies, pastries, pies and cakes, Tracy also provides area residents with an 'easy-out' Friday meal at the Main Street, Belmont store. The "Friday Night Feast" is becoming increasingly popular with the neighborhood, offering a dinner-to-go package at a special price. Meals are often coupled with a baked treat from Mertz's oven, giving patrons an opportunity to sample sweets available daily, or for catered events. Mertz says, "I love to cook, and I love Belmont; I'd feed the entire village if I could!" This week's special is a family favorite—meatloaf, mashed potatoes and a side salad. Check in every week for a new special and suggest your own favorite, as well!



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