BELMONT — As residents of the city welcome the return of Spring this year, they can now find everything they need to get 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 opened on April 1, a Grand Opening celebration was held at all three locations last Saturday, offering free giveaways and a large assortment of plants and flowers 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 furniture, wooden rockers, Salmon Falls Pottery and Big Hill Pottery of Andover, 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 available.

The country store offers food items, too, and Osborne’s shelves are filled with pickled eggs, relishes, maple syrup, Camp Mix all-miller 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 here, too,” he said.

Preparing all of these 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 piles of animal care needs, 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 fruits and vegetables along with many beautiful selections of flowers and shrubs.

Osborne’s also offers a line of Carhartt clothing and footwear, and for the local outdoorsman in your life, there is a great selection of collectible miniatures, front and rear 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 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sundays. Osborne’s Agway Farm and Garden Center is located on Route 3 just past of Mosquito Bridge in the Winnisquam area of Belmont. More information on all that they have to offer can also be found at www.osborne-agway.com.

LACOSA — 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 a discussion during a workshop entitled “Bank Financing for New or Existing Businesses.”

Sponsored by the Bank of New Hampshire (formerly Laconia Savings Bank), W. Stephen Leighton, Senior Vice President, Laconia Savings Bank, will share his expertise. Steve has been a commercial lender in the Lakes Region for more than 10 years with lending experiences to larger and smaller businesses. Leighton graduated from St. Anselm College and from Stosnier Graduate School of Banking. He is active in the Lakes Region 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, 338 South Main Street, 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, 33 South Main St., Laconia, NH 03246. To register, call SCORE Lakes Region at 603-528-7700 or 800-682-2338, or online at lakesregion.score.org/localworkshops.

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

Rustic Raven finds a new place to nest

Tracy Mertz has chosen the Belmont Village Store to ‘nest’ her business. Specializing in premium quality children’s, maternity, pet and toys, Tracy also provides area residents with an ‘easy-hop’ Friday and Saturday night 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 own oven, giving patrons an opportunity to sample specialties I offer, or for catered events,” Mertz says. “I love to cook, and I love Belmont; I fed the entire village if I could!” This week’s special is a family favorite—meatloaf, mashed potatoes and a side salad.

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