

Green Earth Grocery marks 35th anniversary; still 'labor of love' for owners

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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Just after their 35th anniversary of the store's purchase, Green Earth Grocery has upheld an excellent standard of business that has never sacrificed quality in all of its years.

When Thad and Susan Buckey purchased the store in 1980, they were motivated to stock a store with the healthiest and highest quality items. Having worked for IBM for 13 years, Buckey became interested in health foods for doing payroll systems for health food stores. This triggered his interest in living a healthier lifestyle and ultimately, gave him the idea to start his own business.

“One of the most important things I try to do here is carry high quality products that work,” Buckey said. “I make sure that the vitamins and materials are tested. In the vitamin industry, most of them are untested. I send everything to a lab to make sure everything is legitimate.”

The store, located at 441 S. Buchanan St. in Edwardsville, Ill, carries a huge variety of vitamins, sports nutrition, organic cosmetics, body care items, natural foods, pet foods, and much more. The store also contains a deli that provides fresh meats and ready-to-eat dishes. Organic smoothies are also made to order in house.

“One thing that is difficult to keep stocked is our local meats and eggs,” Buckey said. “The demand for organic eggs, for example, is extremely high. We asked our egg guy to get more chickens.” Buckey also stated that he tries to make sure that all of the items in store are kept in stock for some of the people who drive from out of Edwardsville to enjoy his store's items.

Something that sets Buckey's store apart from other organic stores or even the corporate grocery stores is their massive self-serve dispensary aisle. Over 185 herbs and spices, as well as legumes and organic teas are on display for customers to get what they need without waste.

“We sell everything by the ounce, so if you only need a pinch, you can get it and put it in a little bag. They are always fresh and they turn over often,” Buckey said.

With a changing, competitive marketplace, Buckey has to focus on some of the business end of things. “Back in the day, we were the only one doing organic produce. That's what made our store the most unique. Now, everyone carries it.

“With some of the larger stores opening up, it makes it a little difficult for us to recover, but we do and we will,” Buckey said.

The best part of owning a health food store isn't the variety of food and spices on the shelf; it is the people the dedicated owner works with.

“I think my favorite part is the fact that all of the people who work here actually know what they’re talking about, all 17 people that work here. Our main staff had been in the business a long time. They’re extremely great at helping customers.”

At the end of the day, Green Earth Grocery is a labor of love for Buckey and his family.

“It doesn’t feel like work,” Buckey said. “Starting a business was difficult all those years ago, but now, it’s just so much fun.”









JUICE

Wheat Grass

Ginger 1 clove

Sweet Beet

Hawaiian Delight

Summer Breeze

Monkey Juice

Tropical Sunset

Immunity Boosts

Green Earth, God

Green Leaf

Casey, James H. 1891

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