

2025 MMBA *Facility of the Year*

Award Winners



BEST THEMED PROMOTION

Last Year an employee approached me and showed me a Tik Tok on how in California they were selling bags with little bottles in them with mix to go. I said we can do more than that!! With that Cocktails to Go was Born!!

Cocktails to Go have been a huge success. Our drinks include 50ml bottles, Ice, Mix, A Glass and instructions on how to mix. There is single drinks all the way up to drink dispensers with Party's to go for 4. Some drinks will make 2 drinks per unit some only 1. All are prepackaged ready to go. Being an ex bartender help with coming up with names and drink mixing combos. I'm always on the lookout for new 50 ml bottles of liquor. The trick is to try to get the proportions to match.... Some drinks are a little strong!! I have made drinks in Fish bowl!! Added Swedish fish for fun!! Glowing ice cubes, anything to make them more fun!!

530 Cocktails to Go have been sold from 4/29/24 to date. Prices from \$3.49 - \$29.99.

Markup 20% to 71%. So averages around 50% Markup.

It all depends on the cost of the Glass and I try to get not to outrageously priced (on the larger ones) so people will buy them as an add on sale.

And that's my story, I know the Phillips salesman has showed a couple stores my idea but Riverside Liquor was the first!!

Thank You

Pam Koska and her wonderful Staff!!



2025 MMBA Facility Award

Community Involvement

The Vergas Municipal Liquor store has always been more than just a liquor store to the 350 some residents of Vergas. They're active in several ways within their community. Here are a few examples.

The liquor store staff work closely with the city's fire department for fundraising events. They've donated alcohol for a "Wheelbarrow of Booze" to be raffled off and promoted the event in their store and on their Facebook page.

Two years ago, the fire department started doing a "Wall of Beer" raffle event. Each fireman bought beer that they donated, and the whole wall of beer was awarded to one random winner. Kyle worked with the fire department to get better pricing on purchased cases of beer. Last year they changed it up and started asking the public to donate. They were expecting just a small handful of donations, but ended up getting about 50 cases of beer donated. Keep in mind that Vergas only has a population of 350, so 50 cases donated was a HUGE outpouring of support! This fundraising event has become one of the largest and most popular events in town, and the whole community wins!

They also work closely with The Marshmallow Foundation, which is a local animal shelter similar to the Humane Society. They have a donation jar at the register throughout the year. In December, Kyle personally matched every penny donated. It usually ends up being a couple hundred dollars raised. Two summers ago, they had a large event in town and Kyle got the Marshmallow Foundation to bring a shelter dog to the event. A regular customer of theirs, the local coffee shop, and Kyle all offered to pay for this dog's adoption fees, and the dog found her "forever" home!

The folks at the Vergas Municipal Liquor Store take a lot of pride in being a vital part of their community. They participate in and promote a wide variety of community events. They're hoping to give the monetary portion of the award to the Marshmallow Foundation and display the award with pride at the liquor store.

Buy a Fireman A Beer Fundraiser -



Vergas Municipal Liquor Store

October 23, 2024 · 🌐

...

Today is your last day to purchase beer at a huge discount to donate to the [Vergas Fire/Rescue Department](#) annual fundraiser. After today, you may still purchase cases of beer and donate them but at regular price.

Buy a Fireman a Beer!

The Vergas Fire & Rescue Annual Fundraiser is **Saturday, October 26th**.

As part of the fundraiser, they will be auctioning off a "Wall Of Beer" and You can help!

Purchase any of the beers below at the reduced price. Purchased beer remains at The Vergas Liquor Store. We will then deliver all purchased beer to the fundraiser to be auctioned off. All proceeds raised go to the Annual Fundraiser for firefighters and rescue.

6 pack of 16-ounce cans

\$6 regular price \$8.49

12 pack of 12-ounce cans

\$10 Regular price \$13.99

24 pack of 12-ounce cans

\$20 Regular price \$24.99

Vergas Fire & Rescue will be donating \$75 Looney Bucks to one lucky winner. Write your name & number on the back of your receipt for your chance to win!

Vergas Wine Walk –



Vergas Municipal Liquor Store

October 9, 2024 · 🌐

...

One of your favorite events of the year is less than 2 weeks away!



Vergas Community Club

October 4, 2024 · 🌐

The 🍷 6th Annual Vergas Wine Walk 🍷 is just 2 weeks away!
Such a fun event....bring your friends and enjoy the day.

🛍️ SHOP - 🍷 SIP - 🍴 EAT - REPEAT!

It's going to be ... See more

Vergas Hairyman Festival –



Vergas Municipal Liquor Store

September 18, 2024 · 📍

...

Registration forms are available at the Vergas Liquor Store. Get your team signed up



HMF 2024

Annual Hairyman Festival Bean Bag Tournament
Saturday, September 28th, 2024 @ 2:00 pm

REGISTRATION IS \$25 (cash only)

****IMPORTANT RULES:**

- Each player throws all four bags by alternating tosses with the opposing player.
 - The round is complete after all eight bags are tossed.
- The points are awarded as follows:**
- 3 points for each bag made in the hole, 1 point for each bag made on the board. A bag must go completely in the hole to count for 3 points. Any bag(s) that is partially in the hole and partially on the board counts as 1 point.
 - The score for each round is determined by each team combining their points for all bags in the hole with all bags on the board. The team with the higher total subtracts the opposing team's points and earns the points of the difference between the two totals. The team with the lower total does not earn any points for the round.
 - The team that scores more points for the round goes first in the next round. If there is a tie, the team that went first in the previous round shall go first in the next round.

~~The winner is declared once a team reaches or exceeds 21 points after the completion of a round.~~

Entry Form:

Limited to 32 Teams

Registration: Date _____

Team Name: _____

Team Member Name: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone Number: _____

Team Member Name: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone Number: _____

Paid: _____

We thank you in advance for entering in the bean bag contest at our Hairyman Festival. **Check in for tournament is at the Vergas Baseball Field.** Mark your calendar for an afternoon of fun!!



This completed application form can be delivered to the
Vergas Municipal Liquor or mailed to:
HMF2024 Bean Bag Contest
Attn: Sherri
PO Box 264

For more information, call Barry Lindblom – 218-205-4257- www.vergascommunityclub.com

Vergas Loony Days –



Vergas Municipal Liquor Store

June 10, 2024 · 🌐

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No this isn't Looney Days. But it sure did feel like it was!

Shops & Hops 2024 sure was busy and a ton of fun! We had awesome weather, great beer samples, delicious food and amazing music.

Thank you to all of the breweries who sampled out your beers and ciders. I heard from numerous people that the beers were amazing and a fantastic variety. Ya'll rock!

Thank you to everyone who came out and celebrated with us. We love seeing so many people downtown Vergas. Main Street looks better with a few hundred people laughing and having a good time 😊

A huge shout out to all of the volunteers who helped make this happen! Without you, this wouldn't be possible. You help make Vergas the best town in lakes country!



MMBA Pet Supply Drive –



Vergas Municipal Liquor Store

April 22, 2024 · 🌐

...

Good morning Vergas!



We're still taking donations for a pet drive. Food, leashes, blankets, toys, etc. You name it and the shelter dogs and cats can probably use it.

Also, you can get \$100 back for adopting a pet from a shelter in the month of April. Stop by the liquor store for more details.

[Marshmallow Animal Shelter](#)



Animal Shelter Fundraiser –

 Vergas Municipal Liquor Store is at Marshmallow Animal Shelter.
December 25, 2023 · Detroit Lakes · 

My friend Maggie and I spent some time on Christmas Day with the [Marshmallow Animal Shelter](#) and brought gifts for all the good dogs and cats.

Femur bones
Collars
Dog and cat treats
Cat nip
Cat food

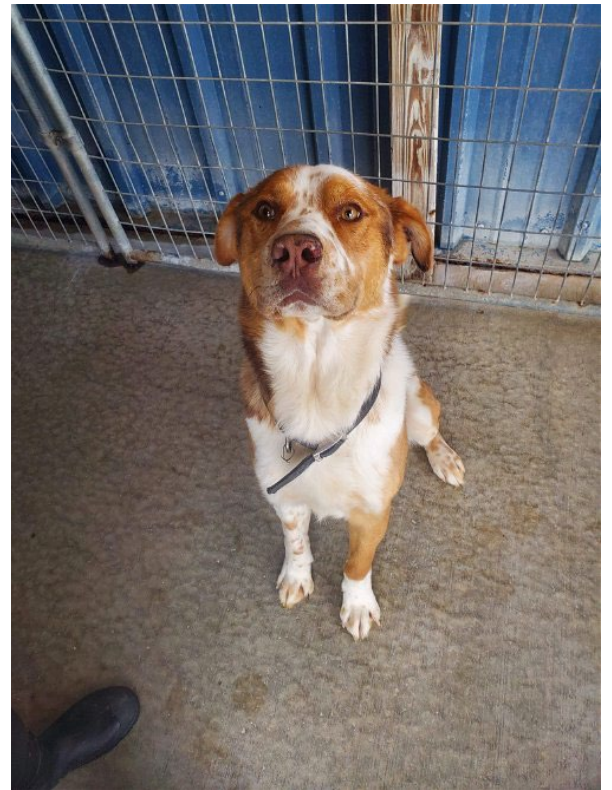
In addition, thanks to all of the customers at the Vergas Liquor Store, we raised \$86 last weekend alone! I said I would match it, so we gave them approximately \$200 cash.
Merry Christmas to everyone. And Merry Christmas to all the animals!



Firefighter Wall of Beer Fundraiser –



Finley before she found her “furever” home –



Sauk Rapids 2025 Team of the Year

Awarded to the facility showing outstanding achievements of teams epitomizing the spirit of unity, collaboration, and collective success in their operation.

Exception teams play an integral role in driving excellence, innovation, and the overarching success of their organization.

The judges will pay particular attention to:

1. Team excellence: *Demonstrate how your team has achieved outstanding teamwork, contributed to significant objectives and impacted the overall success of the organization.*

2. Collaboration and initiative: *Prove your ability to foster collaboration, inspire initiative, and work collectively toward common goals, with specific examples.*

3. Results and impact: *Share measurable results, such as improved performance, positive influence, and contributions to the retail industry.*

Unfortunately, often municipal liquor departments are treated as outliers by city officials and staff.

Furthermore, liquor management often takes a “leave me alone” attitude toward those officials and staff.

The City of Sauk Rapids takes a different approach which has resulted in great success for both the liquor operation and city.

Here are two articles from city administrator Ross Olson showing how the liquor department is integrated into city operations.

I've been with the City of Sauk Rapids since 2000.

I started as the city's Community Development Director and one of seven department heads.

One department though functioned much like an independent service.

Our Liquor Operations Department really didn't participate in our weekly department head meetings nor did the City Administrator or the City Council pay much attention to the day-to-day running of the store.

I think the mentality was as long as the store makes money, everyone is happy.

I became the City Administrator in 2002 and made the decision to treat and interact with the Liquor Operations Department the same as I would the Police Department or the Public Works Department.

All of our departments provide a necessary service to the community and all deserve the respect and attention to make the service the best we can.

This new direction and attention brought with it a site visit and evaluation by the MMBA on how we could become more competitive in our market and how to best engage our leadership and staff at the store.

Sometimes change can be difficult for employees who have become very secure in their usual day-to-day operations.

Change brought about by the observation, expertise and recommendations from the MMBA can take an adequate or underproducing service to a position that can offer a better service and more profit to the city.

This is what happened in my community.

Today, even with harsh competition, the store is as profitable as it has ever been and the leadership, staff and elected officials work together on a regular basis.

To the City Clerks, Administrators and Elected Officials who see their Liquor Operations as a service that is different than services traditionally provided, change your attitude.

Become more involved in the daily operations of your business.

All of the community's services need to work together.

Sauk Rapids doesn't just provide Public Works, Police or Building Inspection services.

We work together to provide efficient and successful community service.

Municipal Liquor Operations in Sauk Rapids is one "City" service we are proud to offer and strive to provide the same level of administrative support to our store and dedicated employees as we do for any other department.

If you want a successful store that will attract and retain quality and dedicated employees, you should do the same.

Keeping City Hall and the City Council Engaged.

At the last Regional Meeting in Alexandria, we went around the room allowing members to share “Updates” from their store.

Members shared how well their store is doing, different promotions and events that have been successful or challenging.

Some shared the existing relationship the store and management is experiencing with their elected leaders.

Some stores shared that City Hall and City Council members absolutely leave them alone and how wonderful this relationship is.

Some other members shared their relationship with City Hall and City Council members is one of micro-management and constant review and criticism.

I am here to tell you if your store has the “Hands Off” relationship with City Hall and your elected leaders, you need to change that.

I believe this situation can quickly change to the more chaotic relationship we all don’t need.

I wrote an article a few years back that spoke to the issue of developing positive relationships with the City Council and City Hall.

I want to bring some of the elements of that article back.

I’ve been with the City of Sauk Rapids long enough to experience a number of different City Council member personalities.

Council Members want to understand and have input on the operations and services the city provides.

Sometimes council members take the “laid-back” approach and only need periodic summaries as to how departments are doing.

But some members are very aggressive and feel they need to be part of many, if not most of the operational decisions.

The City of Sauk Rapids, a number of years ago, developed a working group structure in an effort to keep all City Council members comfortable they are appropriately engaged in the operations of the departments.

Today our City Council has four department working groups consisting of two members of the City Council and the applicable city staff.

The working groups are: Personnel and Finance, Land Use/Development, Public Works and Liquor Operations.

When the City Council established the working group structure, they made a decision to trust the members appointed to each group that they will be appropriately engaged and participate in assisting administration in developing recommendations to the City Council.

It is very important to understand the two working group members from the Council meet on an as-needed basis with staff and the two council members do not make any decisions.

Their role is to provide the City Council with a comfort level that they have spent the appropriate amount of time with staff and feel comfortable with the departments operations and any recommendation being placed on the dais for consideration.

Managing a Liquor Operations Department and keeping elected officials informed can sometimes feel like a difficult task.

When I first came to Sauk Rapids, the City Council basically knew nothing about the operations of our store.

Today, due to the elected leader's structured participation in the working group, the Council better appreciates the services the department provides the community and advocates for the operations/services just as they do for the Police, Public Works and Fire Department.

Working Group Descriptions

Personnel and Finance

This group meets on an as-needed basis (up-to three times per month depending on the time of year) and assists in developing recommendations to the Council on staffing, collective bargaining unit(s), budget and other financial issues.

Land Use/Development

This group meets on an as-needed basis (six to twelve times per year) and assists in developing recommendations to the Council on residential, commercial and industrial related development/zoning issues as well as regulatory issues pertaining to our land-use ordinances.

Public Works

This group meets on an as-needed basis (depends on the current projects) and assists in developing recommendations to the Council on road and infrastructure related projects.

Liquor Operations

This group meets on an as-needed basis (three to four times per year) and assists in developing recommendations to the Council on Liquor Store sales, operations and development related projects.

As always, please feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any questions.

I'm happy to assist!

2025 MMBA Facility Award

Windom In-Store Experience & Design

For many years, Windom has looked at a need for a Rebuild or a Remodel. It was in April of 2021 a Feasibility Study was completed with TSP, Inc. out of Sioux Falls, SD. There we looked at four different designs:

1. An expansion onto the east and south sides of the existing liquor store
2. A teardown and rebuild of the existing liquor store while working with EDA on future development to the south of the liquor store.
3. Exploration of design in leasing square footage from the vacated Shopko building
4. A new build in another location near the vacated Shopko building in hopes of drawing a 2nd major grocery story store to the community.

During this process, option 4 was cut due to somebody else having an interest in that parcel of EDA land. We continued the feasibility study with the first three locations. In the end, we had designs and potential costs, which ranged from \$1.1 Million to \$2.6 Million. Then of course with COVID-19, building materials skyrocketed (30%) and everything was put on hold.

However, I did not give up! In late 2022, we decided to look at a building #5 option. This option involved an expansion onto the south side of the existing building. This came with many different design hurdles. One was that we were sitting in the 100-year flood plain. What did this mean? We had to design for an elevation change. The existing building was built in the mid-1970s. Rules were different. We had to plan for the expansion to be at an elevation of 2 feet higher than the existing store floor. Not ideal for retail. We could have customers going up and down the elevation change. We maximized the expansion by keeping it the same width as the existing building and expanding to the south as far as we could. In turn, we added a 25'x60' addition, which would be our new warehouse/storage. We did not stop there. Other things needed to be addressed from our mid-1970s building. The cooler was outdated and small. The shelving was old, warped, and small, and ADA Accessibility was an issue.

Highlights:

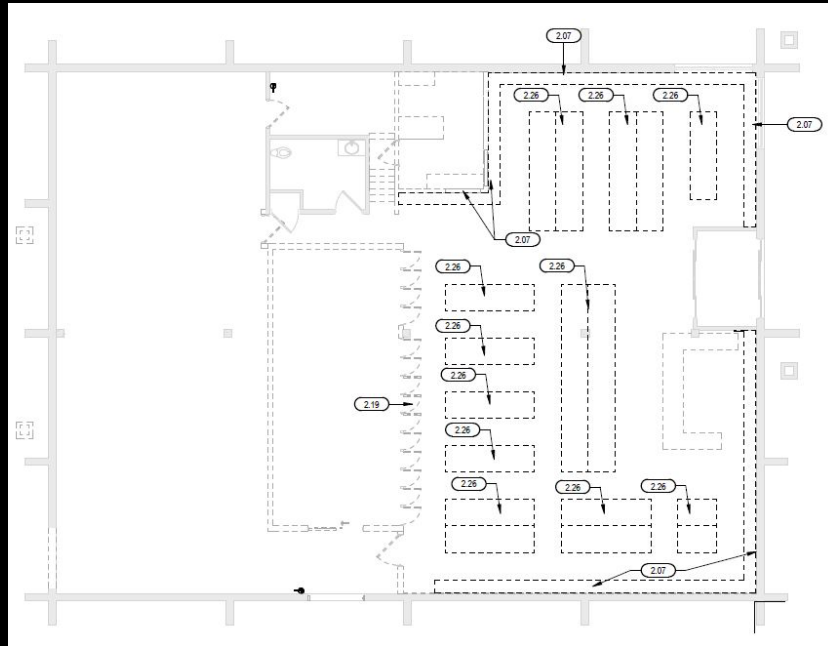
- Walk-in Cooler Space Increased from 455 square feet to 794 square feet (75% Increase)
- Expanded Retail Space from 2,291 square feet to 2,800 square feet (22% Increase)
- Extended Shelving from 929 linear feet to 1304 linear feet (40% Increase)

Construction began in Late September of 2023 and was completed in May of 2024. There were a couple of days of late openings (1 pm instead of the typical 10 am), and only five consecutive days of complete closure during the epoxy flooring install and new shelving setup. When existing wall shelving was dismantled product was stored in the warehouse and was fetched for the customer if it was not set up on a display on the floor.

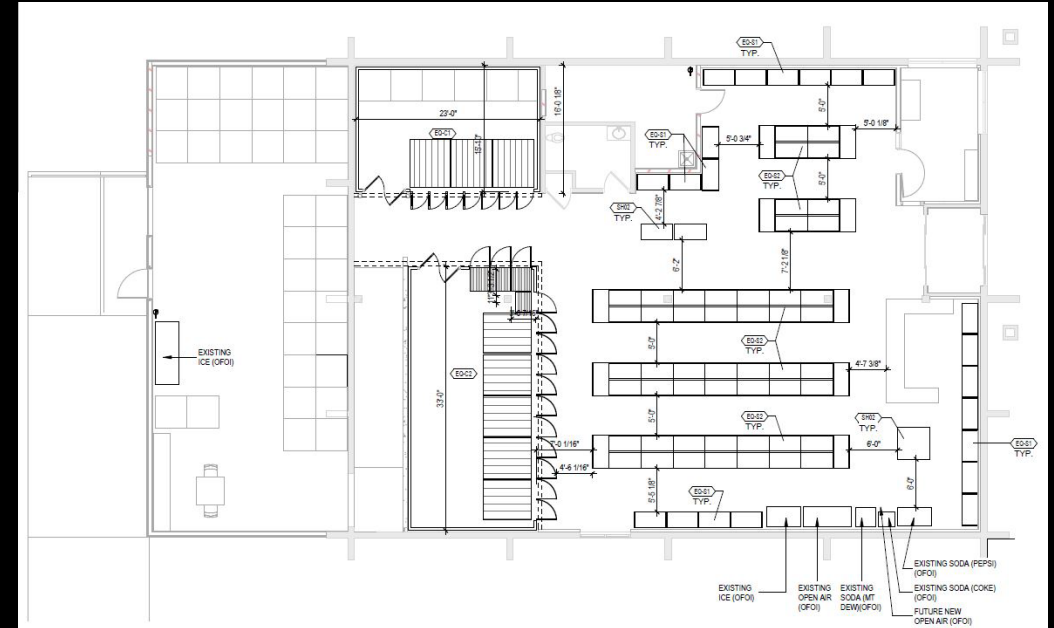
Overall many new and existing customers enjoy this project and some cannot still believe the change that was made.

Check out our Launch Video here: <https://youtu.be/KhMPS31P3wA?si=GmDol8Y8sZn8j9OH> or Search on YouTube for River Bend Liquor. Photos on PowerPoint Document.

Floor Plan Adjustments



Existing Building Floor Plan



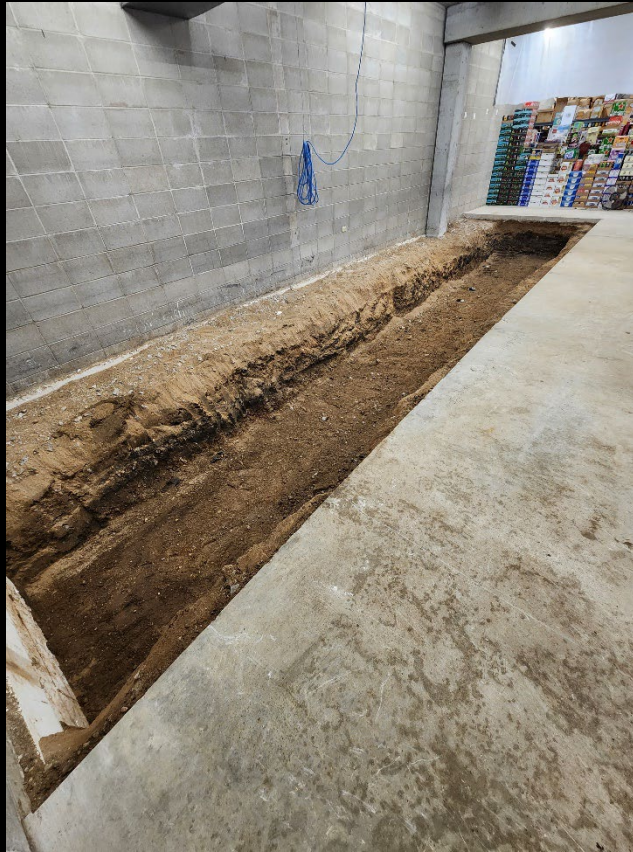
Final Floor Plan Design



Work began in Sept 2023 with Groundwork, forms, fill, existing roof to tie the two buildings together, finished with new sidewalk out front



The existing backroom/warehouse was prepared for footings and a ramp to be built for access between two buildings





Spray foam insulation was added to the new addition and also all exterior walls on the existing building to be a little more energy efficient over the existing exposed brick.



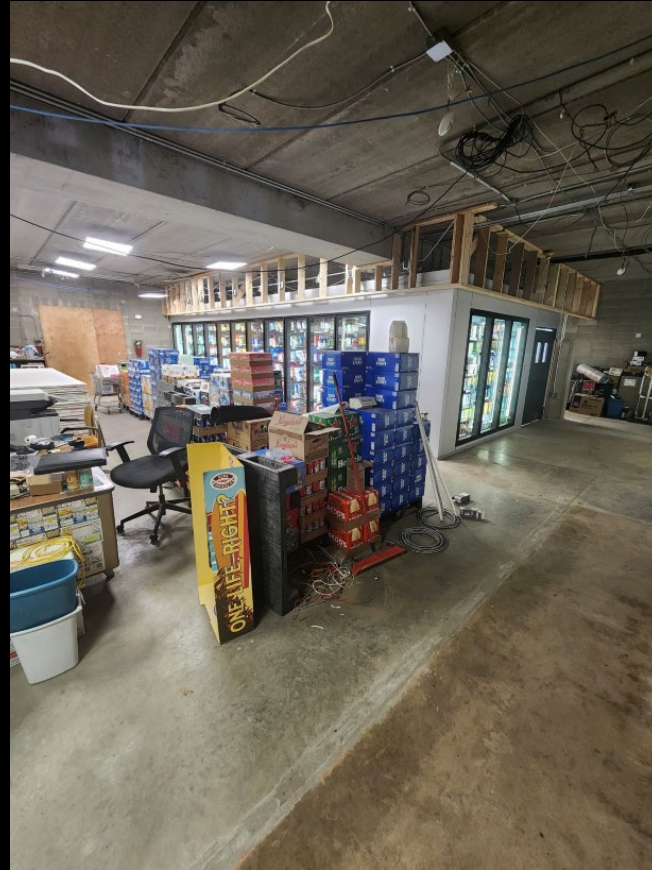
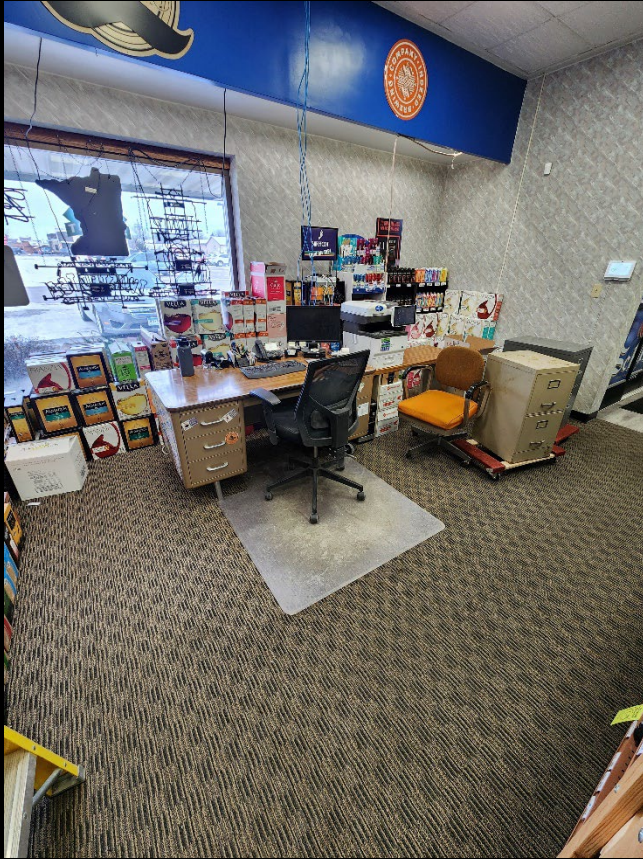
The front entry point was updated as a more modern looking as the old worn awning was removed.





Lots of demo in existing store including removal of shelving and storage. Product was not on shelves for months and managed to maintain sales.





Managed to keep store operational even while moving office 3 times before it was in it's final location.



The only store closure was needed for the installation of epoxy flooring and then initial setup of new shelving



Farmington Liquors 2025 Best Innovation

(Comments from the nominator)

His social media is some of the best I have ever seen, and he utilizes it to its fullest potential.

1. In April for the baseball opening, he created baseball trading cards of the liquor store's senior staff, with bios listed
2. In March he made a video of him as a leprechaun sitting on a barrel "Josh O' Sollinger"
3. Better yet is his Super Bowl feed where he is mourning that he cannot root on his favorite team (in front of a Dallas Jersey, then says or his second favorite team (in front of a Ponder Jersey) which he says no comments. LOL. But then it goes into what is on sale.
4. Best is his pre football season video of his staff in training video showing how his team trains to serve the customer.

In addition to this, he utilizes the Farmington Feed, a podcast to support the operations big events and fundraisers. Using social media and the podcast, they raised over \$24.000 for the Farmington K-9 unit and "Tots for Town," which is the police department's Toys for Tots but ensures all the giving remains in town.



Farmington Liquors · Follow

March 17 at 6:00 PM · 🌐

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Meet your Farmington Liquors All-Stars!

Marc F - 14 Years

I love my job because it allows me to make a positive impact in the Farmington community. The proceeds from the Liquor stores benefit our parks, senior center, and the Fire and Police Departments. I like to think I am doing my part in helping provide a higher quality of life and more recreational opportunities for all in our community!

Dave T - 22 Years

I love working in the community that I live in. It has been amazing being a part of the growth we have experienced since we were in that small store next to Subway. Being witness to of all the changes in the industry has been exciting. The relationships I've made with all the co-workers, customers, and sales reps are something I greatly appreciate.

Scott H - 13 Years

I love working at Farmington Liquors because it offers a vibrant and exciting atmosphere. Friendly customers and all my teammates are a great perk as well.

ALL-STARS



SCOTT H • 13 YEARS

ALL-STARS



ALL-STARS



DAVE T • 22 YEARS



Farmington Liquors

August 31, 2024 · 🌐

Get your game face on for this Liquors video! 🍷... See more





Farmington Liquors · Follow

Reels · Feb 5 · ⚙️



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