


# Bandera Mini-Mart celebrating golden anniversary by giving back to VFDs

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Commemorations for firefighters line the walls in Bandera Mini Mart, where customers can donate to their local VFDs. One hundred percent of funds will go toward departments in Mini Mart's hill country vicinity BULLETIN PHOTO/ Tracy Thayer

In celebration of its 50th birthday, Bandera's Mini Mart is hosting customer appreciation events through September and giving back to local fire departments.

The first Mini Mart convenience store began in 1973, but the second store started shortly thereafter in Bandera. The original Bandera store was located on Main Street adjacent to the old EMS Office and subsequently moved to its current location at 377 Hwy 16 S.

The Bandera Mini Mart location will celebrate with a customer appreciation event on June 7 from 10 a.m. until noon.

The company will host customer appreciation events at all the stores through the end of September, featuring giveaways and all kinds of fun for patrons and participants at each store.

Today, the Fritz family owns 18 stores scattered throughout the Texas Hill Country, employing almost 200 employees.

Bandera Mini-Mart team members include veteran store manager Marybeth Rockwell with 15 years' experience.

Senior Shift Lead Richard McIntyre, Senior Shift Lead Jennifer Gonce, Shift Lead 1 Kimberly Chretien, Team Member 1 Nathan Kitzman, Team Member 1 Sydney Fee, Team Member 1 Zachery Brambila-Scott, Team Support 1 Ryan Molnar and Team Support 1 Adan Aguilar are a part of Rockwell's team in Bandera.

According to company co-owner Silvia Fritz Dobbs, "They are the ones that make us a success."

In 1973, Junior Fritz and his wife, Ann, opened their first Mini Mart in Kerrville. Even though Junior and Ann Fritz have passed away, their children Sylvia Fritz Dobbs and David Fritz have kept their legacy of knowing and serving the local community alive.

Sylvia and David credit their parents for teaching them the ins and outs of running a successful business by truly caring for people.

"Well, I think our parents started off by offering friendly service and being real to people. I think our staff, managers, and team members create a family atmosphere with our store customers. They create that connection because they know the needs of people who shop there," remarked Sylvia Fritz Dobbs. "Now because life is so busy, it's even more important that people know your name and what you want."

Another focus is on store cleanliness and keeping the product lines updated.

Dobbs said the business has evolved over time. Citing the use of technology, social media and human resources, she explained that over time things have changed in the business, such as bottled water and energy drinks.

When she and her brother bought out their parents, a large variety of bottled water and energy drinks were not stocked. Today, Mini-Marts carry many varieties of bottled water and energy drinks, which are even more popular than soft drinks and beer. Watching customer demographics and keeping up with current trends is a fulltime job for the company.

The Mini-Mart corporation also has supported the Bandera County Library, Bandera County Youth Livestock Show, Bandera Fire and Rescue, Castle Lake Volunteer Fire Department, Medina Fire Department, Bandera ISD Education Foundation, Project Graduation in Bandera, Bandera Youth Rodeo, Bandera 4H, Boys and Girls Club of Bandera County, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Young Life, Meals on Wheels, American Legion, Riding on Faith Rodeo, Bandera County Chamber of Commerce, Bandera River Fest, A Cowboy Christmas, Bandera Frontier Days, Bandera Mardi Gras, Bandera Hunters' Barbeque and Bandera BBA National Day of the Cowboy.