

A community salute to the

HANKE FAMILY

for 70+ years of service



NEW MEDIA INC.

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The former owners of Hanke's Sentry Foods in Wittenberg celebrate the sale of the store in April. From left, Gary Hanke, Sandy Hanke, Sherry Hersant and Dale Hanke. SEE STORIES ON PAGES 4-5 and 7.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FRIENDS THE **HANKE FAMILY** HERE FOR THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER **70 YEARS**

HO-CHUNK GAMING WITTENBERG

We look forward to another 70 years of fantastic service from your family to ours.

Thank You from your friends at,
Ho-Chunk Gaming Wittenberg
& The Ho-Chunk Nation

Hats off to the Hanke's Super Market Team for all the many years you have served your community. I take great pleasure in being a part of your lives for the last 30 years. Glad I could help when we sold your old store and moved to the new one where you are now. You have done so many wonderful services for so many people and now it is time for you all, Sherry, Dale, Sandy, and Gary to retire and sit back and relax. I always enjoyed shopping at your store for so many years and plan to continue to do so for hopefully, many more years to come.

Thanks and Thanks!



JAN KRAETSCH
Owner/Broker



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MILESTONES



ABOVE: Dale, Sandy and Gary Hanke celebrate the business' 58th anniversary in 2009. TOP RIGHT: A line of customers is checked out as Hanke's Red Owl opens to the public. RIGHT: Ground is broken for the new Hanke's Sentry store on April 16, 2012.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HANKE FAMILY

**Congratulations to Hanke's Sentry Foods
on 70 Years of Service in the
Wittenberg-Birnamwood community!**

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**Congratulations to
the Hanke Family on
70 years of serving
customers with grace
and compassion.**

May your retirement bring you the rest
and relaxation you so richly deserve.
God's Blessing to all of you!

Benji and Jennifer Schmidt & Staff

Schmidt & Schulta
FUNERAL HOME

Celebrating seven decades of service

The time spent serving community was 'an honor and a pleasure'

By **LUKE REIMER**
Reporter

Hanke's Sentry Foods is under new ownership, and the family that has owned Wittenberg's grocery store for more than 70 years has retired.

The Hanke family has sold the local grocery store, located at 110 S. Mission St., Wittenberg, to Hometown Grocers Inc., a family-owned and Wisconsin-based company. The Skogen family that owns Hometown Grocers has been in the industry since 1946. Hometown Grocers, a subsidiary of Festival Foods, also operates four other grocery stores in Wisconsin.

"The main reason that we purchased Hanke's is because we are in the business and enjoy grocery stores," said Steve Burkhardt, vice president of Hometown Grocers, or HGI. "We have found that smaller grocery stores like this, we feel like we can help serve them. There are lot of independent grocers looking to sell as they get to the end of their career, and they are looking to someone that they can trust that is honest and will take of their people. HGI is doing what we can to do that for them."

The sale was initiated by members of the Hanke family who decided to



From left, owners Gary Hanke, Sandy Hanke, Sherry Hersant and Dale Hanke smile in front of the portrait of Roger and Bernice Hanke. The family recently sold the store to Hometown Grocers Inc., and their last day arrived at the end of April.

GREG MELLIS | NEW MEDIA

retire. Their last day was April 26.

"I think it was just time," said Sandy Hanke, who helped run the store with her husband, Gary.

"We are just going to spend some time with family and try to get to a couple ball games here and there," Gary Hanke added.

Hanke's began as a Red Owl cor-

ner store in Wittenberg in 1951. From there, Roger and Bernice Hanke purchased the former International Harvester building that was located on Howard and Reed streets. In 1988, the Red Owl name was purchased by SuperValu, and the store in Wittenberg became Hanke's SuperValu in 1989.

Eventually, Roger and Bernice's children became involved with the store. Under the ownership of Gary Hanke, Dale Hanke, Sherry Hersant and Gary's wife, Sandy, the store moved to its current location in 2012.

"This has been a place where people come to get together and catch up," said Sandy Hanke. "There

Gary, Sandy, Sherry & Dale ~

Dedication is defined as the giving of oneself for some purpose. The Hanke family dedicated themselves to providing the Wittenberg area with a wonderful grocery store. Thank you to Gary, Sandy, Sherry and Dale you are all the best and we're grateful for each of you.

With gratitude ~ Jeff & Pamela
~ Wittenberg Corner Laundry
~ Wittenberg Seeds Sales

**Congratulations
and Thank You**

to the Hanke family for their commitment to their customers and community over the past 70 years.





Before there was Hanke's Sentry, Hanke's Red Owl was the place to go in Wittenberg.

CONTRIBUTED

are people of all ages who just come in here and feel comfortable and talk about their families, children and lives."

Gary Hanke said that with the sale of the store, the family is confident the next owners will continue the tradition of providing high-quality food to the people of Wittenberg.

"We are happy to find another grocery store that is family-oriented and that shares our values with the community," said Gary Hanke.

"We aren't completely sure on the name yet," added Sandy Hanke. "I believe that they will keep it a Sentry Foods, though."

"Community involvement is one of our values," said Burkhardt. "For the most part, we are going to continue to do the same things that they are doing."

Burkhardt added that over the

next few months, Hometown Grocers wants to integrate into the community before they make any major changes.

"There are always categories that are expanding and shrinking in the grocery industry," said Burkhardt. "Over the next few months, those things will become evident to us. When we first go in, our goal is to keep as much the same as possible. We want to get to know the people, get to know the schedule and keep the shelves stocked."

Sandy Hanke said that the family was ready to sell.

"We went to UNFI, the parent company of Sentry Foods, and said that we are thinking about selling, but nothing is concrete yet," she said. "They called us in December and said that we have someone who might be interested. From there, it

just kind of happened."

She added that Hometown Grocers will try to keep the store the same as when the Hanks owned and ran the store.

"They have said that in so many words," said Sandy Hanke. "They want to keep it as local as possible. We are not aware of anything new that they want to introduce. The basics will stay the same. They told me that they are going to continue to be involved in the community."

According to Sandy Hanke, Hometown Grocers has offered the same positions to all of the employees who are currently employed at Hanke's.

Throughout their existence, Hanke's has been involved by serving the community, as well as being involved in local organizations.

"We have played a large role in the community," said Sandy Hanke. "We help with local groups that need support. We put flyers in bags for organizations that are doing fundraisers. We are there for our community; they can shop here comfortably."

She added that they wanted to carry on the tradition of supporting local businesses and organizations that started with her father-in-law.

"Roger was heavily involved in the community," said Sandy Hanke. "He was involved with the Legion, the church and other organizations. It has been what the Hanks have been doing since I have known them."

Gary Hanke said that with their community activism, the family received the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, rewarded by Lions International.

"That is an award given to individuals and businesses that serve the community," said Gary Hanke. "We are really honored to receive that award."

Hersant added that her family

has always felt like they were a part of the community, especially before they moved to their current location.

"At the old store, we knew everybody and could talk to them about their lives and families," said Hersant. "With the new store, there are some strangers that come in, but we get to know them."

Gary Hanke said that to have the opportunity to provide community members with groceries has been impactful.

"It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve our friends and customers in the Wittenberg area and the surrounding communities," said Gary Hanke. "We have developed quite a few friendships and relationships inside and outside of Wittenberg."

Reflecting on their time owning the store, the family chose some fond memories that stuck out over the past 70 years.

"I really enjoyed doing our June Dairy Month, where I could dress up like a character," said Dale Hanke.

"We also did frozen food months, where we would hold contests," added Gary Hanke. "There was usually a customer who would win a special sale. We also used to do a produce sale — that was always a lot of fun."

Throughout their time owning and managing the store, the Hanks said that they have learned a lot about being involved in the community and will continue to stay in touch during retirement.

"I don't see me stopping working with community groups," said Sandy Hanke. "I see us doing that, because it is what we do. I have made a lot of friends. I enjoy people, and I enjoy being a part of the community."

Gary Hanke thanked the staff for the hard work that they put in under the family's ownership.

"The staff and our employees have been essential to our success," said Gary Hanke. "We appreciate what they have done for us."

— FIREWORKS COUNTRY —

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Jerry, Sally, & Tony Stickman

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*Gary, Sandy, Dale
and Sherry,
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Best of luck, and
enjoy retirement.*



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Wellers

Congratulations & Thank You



Hanke Family

for 70 years
of success and service to
the community!

Wittenberg Area Historical Society

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witthistsoc@gmail.com

Follow our current hours & events on Facebook, "Wittenberg Area Historical Society"

Gary, Sherry, and Dale:

We wish you the best in your retirement from
the grocery store. Your parents would be so
proud of what you have done with the
family business over the years.

Congratulations! From The Cousins:

Judy, Donna, Doris, Diane, Bill, David,
Allison, Steve, Sue, Jesse, Shirley, Jack,
Shane, Dan, Joe, Polly, Kelly and families

**THANK YOU & CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
HANKE FAMILY FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE
FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS & THE COMMUNITY!**



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THANK YOU HANKE FAMILY!

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to the
Hanke Family!**

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**Congratulations to
Hanke's Sentry
on 70 years in the community!**



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A grateful community says thanks

By **LUKE REIMER**
Reporter

As a longtime Wittenberg grocery store transfers ownership, members of the community have nothing but good things to say about the store and the family that ran it for decades.

The Hanke family recently sold Hanke's Sentry Foods to Hometown Grocers Inc., a subsidiary of Wisconsin-based Festival Foods. Both the Hanke family and their store, which began as a Red Owl corner store in 1951, have played a large role in the Wittenberg community and left an impact on community members.

Wittenberg resident Miriam Nelson, who is active in the Crossroads Community Theatre, said the Hanks have always supported the group.

"Their staff at their store have sold our tickets at their service center," said Nelson. "They do that for a lot of nonprofit events as it's a key location for the area."

Nelson said that the Hanke family's relationship with the community has always been strong. She gave as an example the location they chose when they moved the store in 2012.

"It was a big decision for them to build a new store, and it turned out to be one that was well supported by the surrounding area," said Nelson.

Wittenberg-Birnamwood Superintendent Garrett Rogowski said the Hanke family has been great for the school district to work with.

"They have supported this community and school district in so many ways. They have provided a major resource and need to families throughout the entire region," said Rogowski. "They have been a great employer in the Wittenberg-Birnamwood area. We have been very fortunate to have access to such a great resource in our community."

Wittenberg Village President Bill

Switalla also noted that Hanke's Sentry Foods has provided the community with careers as well as groceries.

"They have always provided our community with jobs and good service," said Switalla. "They are a hometown store. They have lived right here in the community; they go to the same churches and go to same events as the rest of us. They are great family to have around. We are sorry to see them go."

Switalla added that the family has always supported all of the village's functions and events, including Community Days, in addition to supporting the schools in the district.

The Hanke family said that they wanted their store to feel like a place where community members could meet and visit, as opposed to just coming in for groceries. Rogowski said that this has been the case in his experience.

"It was very common to visit the store and chat with many local friends and families that were there at the same time," said Rogowski.

Former Wittenberg Chamber of Commerce President Travis Rose said the store has always been a place where he was recognized or he recognized someone else.

"It was always fun to be able to see community members, knowing that there was a local resource without having to drive to a bigger area," said Rose. "That was place that I felt comfortable, where I could just engage with others in the community."

He added that the community is very grateful to the Hanks for their years of dedication to the people of Wittenberg.

"We are very appreciative of the efforts that they have made to make their service available to us," said Rose. "It is nice to have that local resource as opposed to traveling to Wausau, Shawano or Green Bay."



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Thanks & Congratulations
to the Hanke Family!

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Thanks & Congratulations
on 70 years committed to the
Wittenberg-Birnamwood Community!

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Hanke family for their over
70 years of dedication and
service to the Wittenberg
community. Your support
and service to the church
and community have been
much appreciated.

Everyone is welcome to join us:

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and

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