



Good Food Access Program Grant Recipient Profile

KNUTSON'S GROCERY Roosevelt, Minnesota

Providing more healthy food choices – including locally grown – to customers.

One hundred years is a long time for a business to survive but Knutson's Grocery in Roosevelt, Minn. has done just that. Dean Knutson's parents bought the store from the previous owners in 1980, and in 1998 Dean purchased the store from his parents. Together with his wife he has been running the store since then, offering groceries and specialty meats that are made in-house.

With the next closest grocery stores being 12 miles in one direction and 24 miles in the other, Dean sees a wide range of local folks, as well as visitors to nearby Lake of the Woods. "When you have this business, you're a gathering place of sorts," he says. "We're able to sit and interact with people. And when you don't have these small businesses, it really takes something away from rural America."



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Knutson's applied for and received a grant from the Good Food Access Fund to update their refrigeration and freezer equipment. "The new refrigeration is a tremendous help," says Dean. "Older equipment is hard to keep operating, and if we can't keep it operating then we won't be around."



The storefront sign of Knutson's has been a mainstay of Roosevelt, Minn., which can now serve healthier, refrigerated foods thanks to the grant.

With the grant they'll replace an older cooler with a larger one that will hold more fruit and dairy, as well as locally grown and Minnesota grown products. They will also replace two outdated freezers as well as a meat case.

Dean says that the grant will let Knutson's provide more and healthier choices to customers, since they'll now have the right equipment to keep produce fresher longer. "We're hoping that people will be able to make better choices that way. We can't twist anyone's arm but if you can better display things like apples and pears, we'll be more successful at it, that's for sure."

Dean feels that efforts like the Good Food Access Fund are beneficial to small business, and to rural America as a whole. "These small-town businesses have paid taxes all their lives and pay their employees well, but our customer base is smaller, and margins are tighter, so efforts like this are important," he says.



ABOUT THE GOOD FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

Recognizing the need for food access solutions in Minnesota, the American Heart Association, together with local and state coalition partners, advocated for the creation of the Good Food Access Program within the Minnesota Department of Agriculture in 2016. The program provides grants, loans and technical assistance to local enterprises for innovative food access solutions.

Learn more at www.mnhealthykids.org

For more information and to get involved, contact Lorna Schmidt // Lorna.Schmidt@heart.org