

Wells REC Ruralite

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Assistant Manager Stacey Strong stands outside the recently opened Golden Gate Petroleum in Wells.

PHOTO BY SARAH SPRATLING



Assistant Manager Stacey Strong, left, and Joey Robison staff the counter at Golden Gate Petroleum in Wells.

Photos by Sarah Spratling

Wells Gets New Convenience, Fuel Stop

Golden Gate Petroleum listens to customers' wishes

By Dianna Troyer

Cheese curds were a mystery food to Stacey Strong when a customer at Golden Gate Petroleum asked her to stock them at the new gas station and convenience store in Wells.

"I had never even heard of them and didn't know what they would taste like," says Stacey, assistant manager at Golden Gate Petroleum's convenience store retail outlet at 145 N. Highway 93.

"We found a source, and now they're a best seller," she says. "Our company's philosophy is to listen to our customers and cater to what they want. It's nice the company offers that flexibility with

purchasing new items."

Cheese curds were not the only wish fulfilled since the store opened in October.

"Hillshire Farm makes a cheese, meat and cracker tray," Stacey says. "We started stocking those, too, and they've become a best seller. Other customers asked for live bait, poles and other fishing supplies, so we provide that, too."

Local residents and travelers patronize Golden Gate for its food, low diesel prices, gift shop and small gaming room.

Employees from the corporate headquarters in Reno joined the staff of 12 at the Wells store to organize a grand opening in May.



Clockwise from above, when it comes to product selection, Stacey says she appreciates how attentive the owner is to the needs of customers. Golden Gate Petroleum is an ideal location for traffic heading in all directions. Garden gnomes seem to be a favorite novelty.

Stacey says she is impressed Golden Gate Petroleum has a corporate philosophy of sincerely caring about its employees and customers.

The company's owner, president and CEO Dennis O'Keefe randomly visits. "It's really nice when the owner shakes your hand and asks, 'How are you?'" Stacey says. "It's great to show him around and tell him about our customers' comments and what people in Wells are buying."

A second-generation, family-owned petroleum and biofuel business founded in 1946, Golden Gate Petroleum has bulk distribution centers, a refinery near Reno and nearly 30 convenience store retail outlets in California, Nevada and Colorado.

In 1996, the company began distributing alternative non-petroleum fuels, including biodiesel and ethanol. It is the first and largest distributor of renewable diesel.

Wells was an ideal choice for another retail store because traffic is steady, with

motorists and truckers traveling north and south on Highway 93, and east and west on Interstate 80.

Once Wells was selected, land was bought that would allow convenient access to gas pumps.

"Customers say they like being able to pull in and out so easily," says Stacey.

The price at the pump also pleases drivers of diesel vehicles.

"We keep our diesel fuel competitively priced and often have the lowest price in town," says Stacey.

Corporate accounts are offered for local businesses whose employees fill up regularly. Roadway Repair, a local towing and concrete business, was one of the first corporate account customers.

Golden Gate's loyalty program for food keeps customers coming back.

"We have cards for our hot beverages and fountain drinks," Stacey says. "Teachers stop in regularly on their way to school. So at the end of the week, they get a free drink."



The store sells West Coast Coffee, known for its extensive water filtration system.

"Brewing with the filtered water makes the coffee delicious," she says. "It's the best in town."

The company selected Granato's Deli in Salt Lake City to provide sandwiches.

"They use high quality, flavorful meats," Stacey says. "The sandwiches are made fresh and shipped to us on Friday. By Wednesday, they're sold out."

Golden Gate also has a gift store with Western décor and memorabilia, picture frames, lamps and even garden gnomes.

"We're the only store in town with gnomes," Stacey says, laughing. "The company lets me pick items that will appeal to our customers' tastes. We'll do our best to get what people want." ■