

## **Morland – 1 – Faye Minium**

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

So what's in store? No, I don't mean what is coming up soon. I mean, what is inside the store? Today we'll learn about a community which lost its only local grocery store, only to get it back through its community foundation. Thanks to Logan Falleti of the K-State Center for Engagement and Community Development's Rural Grocery Initiative for this story. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Faye Minium, a long-time local banker, is President of the Morland Community Foundation. The foundation was founded in 1994 and has funded various development projects through the years, but in 2006 it faced a new challenge: The town's only grocery store was closing.

The store in Morland was founded in 1915. Through the years it had been known as Bean's Country Store, Steven's Grocery, and Brook's Store. But in 2006 the owner closed the store because of declining health and age.

In response, the Morland Community Foundation launched an Access to Healthy Food initiative. The goal was to provide healthy food to the elderly and other members of the community. One component of the initiative was to re-open the store and operate it as a non-profit enterprise. They bought the former store building and named the new store Morland Mercantile.

With help from a Community Development Block Grant, the building was winterized, refurbished, and had a new furnace installed. Then another issue surfaced: The store and all of Morland was classified in a flood plain which made it difficult to get permits and insurance. The city did a study and found that the land could be reclassified. So, the city spent \$28,000 over a year to remap and revise the flood plain boundaries. As an additional benefit to the community, all but two residences in Morland were cleared of their floodplain status.

The newly renovated building was then filled with equipment, most of which was donated or bought used. The foundation was able to buy used equipment from a town 100 miles away which had recently closed its grocery store.

The first order of canned goods arrived Oct 22, 2013 followed by deliveries of fresh produce and meat. Volunteers unloaded and stocked all the shelves.

The store's permanent operations will add three new jobs to the town. One of those is a full-time manager. A resident of nearby Hill City, Ron Radcliffe, will be managing the store. With his eight years of management experience, he knew how to set up the shelving in the correct way.

The store is supplied by Affiliated Foods, but in order to meet the minimum shipping order requirement, Morland orders through another rural Affiliated store: Joslyn's Food Center, operated by Mark Joslyn of Hoxie, Kansas. Hoxie is a rural community of 1,207 people. Now, that's rural. When the Morland volunteers were having trouble with the exact dimensions of its meat counter, Mark Joslyn drove through a blizzard to Morland to answer their construction questions himself.

On November 2, 2013, the store opened for business. On November 16, the Governor of Kansas cut the ribbon to celebrate the store's grand opening.

“It was a neat thing,” said Fay Minium. “Everyone had fun and was enthusiastic about being there. It’s been a lot of work and a long time getting here, but I’m optimistic it will be a good project for the whole area. I hope we’re able to provide the service and inventory people in the community want and need, and can provide some unique projects,” she said. Another part of the Access to Healthy Food initiative is a community kitchen where residents can make their own products.

So what’s in store? Not just in store for the future, but in the store itself. The answer is necessities, healthy foods and local products for the people of Morland. We commend Faye Minium and the Morland Community Foundation for making a difference with this new service. If this community can maintain the model of local initiative, there should be a lot more good things in store.

And there’s more. Three doors down from the store is an agribusiness with cutting edge technology. We’ll learn about that next week.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development,  
this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.