

# ALBERT BEGAN BUSINESS WITH NAPA STORE

FROM PAGE 2

that works in a small town. You never get rid of anybody.”

Albert graduated from Brush High School in 1985.

## Adult life

After graduation, Albert headed to work.

“I had a couple different jobs,” he said. “I ended up at Farmland Co-Op in Brush.”

He worked there for a total of about 14 years, starting with “busting tires in the shop,” and then managing the co-op’s service station in Fort Morgan for a few years.

Albert had started delivering propane for the co-op, but he hurt his back.

“They wouldn’t let me drive truck anymore,” he recalled.

That did not stop him from wanting to work, though.

“I came back, and my bosses said come on back and find something productive to do,” Albert recalled. “I learned how to repair gas-fired appliances, and we started offering that service.”

He was put in charge of that service department for the co-op.

“One day, my boss said we were repairing a lot of furnaces,” Albert recalled. “He said, ‘Go with it,’ and we opened a full-scale heating/cooling business.”

This new business was still part of the same co-op, though, and it was till Albert working for someone else.

“Being young, I was getting antsy,” he recalled. “Since I was 16, 17, I told myself, ‘You need to work for yourself, not another person.’”

It would not be long before an opportunity for this would pop up.

“A friend called, said he might have ‘something for you to do,’” Albert recalled of the phone call from Phil Roth in April 2000 that would lead to achieving the goal of working for himself.

Roth was the owner of the NAPA store in Fort Morgan.

“He introduced me to the NAPA world,” Albert recalled. “He gave me a chance, helped me get going on my own. He’s

**Hometown Auto & Hardware owner Steve Albert, second from right, speaks at one of the Ladies Night events at the store in Brush. He called Ladies Night “one of those events I love hosting.”**

COURTESY PHOTO/BRUSH BEET EXPRESS

my angel. I owe him my life as I know it now.”

Together, Albert and Roth bought the NAPA store in Brush in July 2000.

“The original NAPA in Brush burnt down in 1999,” Albert recalled. “They reopened it here, but then they were ready to sell out. It worked out well.”

## Growing business

When Albert and Roth took it over, the store was “just a little NAPA store,” Albert recalled. “In the past it had been a hardware and repair store, too.”

In 2001, they brought the hardware merchandise back to the NAPA store in Brush.

“It was in here for 10 years,” Albert recalled.

They had the option of buying the building that housed the NAPA store in 2005, and they jumped on the opportunity.

“We bought the building instead of paying rent,” Albert said.

Only a few years later, Albert and his wife were able to buy out Roth’s portion of the NAPA store.

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