

ALBERT KNOWN FOR 'FIXING' CUSTOMER'S ISSUES

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"The customers in Brush have been great to us," Albert recalled of what was happening in 2008. "My wife and I bought out Phil's portion, and we became sole owners."

More excitement came in 2011 when there was talk of the Brush Family Dollar store changing locations. It was renting a portion of Albert's building that also houses the NAPA store.

So Albert initially made plans to use that space for his growing hardware business.

At the same time, the brick building next door to Family Dollar went on the market.

"Another friend talked me into buying it," Albert recalled of the brick building the late Bob Wardell had convinced him to purchase. "So we actually owned it when Family Dollar decided they weren't going to move out, they would stay there."

That was not the greatest news for Albert, who had already gotten his plans for moving the hardware store into that space all ready to go.

But now he had that other brick building there with no definite plan for it. The question was whether he could make the plans for the hardware store work in that empty building. The answer was yes.

"So we started our little hardware business all in its own building," Albert recalled. "Moving over there, we just expanded our hardware. We started a greenhouse and a small-engine repair."

The latter wound up being "too busy sometimes," he said, chuckling.

That would not be the end of the businesses within the business that Albert would start out of that brick building.

"We started a rental business at the same time," he said. Available were "tools and equipment rental, everything from carpet cleaners to drain cleaners, skidsteers, posthole diggers, lots of trailers. It's actually really cool. We started with \$60,000 of equipment, and now it's well over \$200,000."

Albert had found a need in the community that he was able to fill with such rental equipment.

"There's a lot of things a community person doesn't need but twice in a lifetime," he said. "We feel like we offer the community a service, offer good equipment that does the job. It's fun."

Customer service

Albert has made helping his customers a major part of his life.

"My wife says I work too much, and I probably do," he

said. "It's fun. I love the customers. It's a joy to have somebody come in with a problem and help them fix it."

While Albert may not be the one to the work that fixes the problem, he likely sells or

rents the tools that can achieve the solution, or he can point someone in the right direction.

"You only come see us when you have a problem, but I hope we have a smile when they walk in the door and give them a

little relief," he said. "I always tell my employees, 'Anybody can buy everything we sell anywhere, but they can only buy it from you here.'"

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