

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS



Karl Barb Keith Kevin

Nobleton, Ontario, Canada

AUGUST 2015

The Davis Family has owned the property at 6770 King Road since 1918. Glenn Davis opened Nobleton Farm Service in one of the out-buildings near the house as a small repair shop for agricultural equipment.

The People

Having opened Nobleton Farm Service in November 1956, with 3 employees, Glenn began selling farm equipment the following year. Phyllis Davis handled the books and other administrative tasks. Glenn had his two sons, Karl and Greg, helping out at an early age. In later years, he also put his grandsons, Keith and Kevin, to work, teaching them how “not to be useless” (Glenn Davis).

Karl, after graduating from Guelph with a degree in engineering, worked as an engineering sales representative for 3 years at the John Deere factory. He returned to the family business in 1981, taking over in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. Barb, Karl’s wife and a ‘Soil Sciences’ graduate of Guelph, manages the day-to-day bookkeeping and sales administration. Both Karl and Barb have hands-on experience in all areas of the business operation.

Keith and Kevin both worked for the company as students, and continue to do so as their career of choice, working out of the Nobleton location. Keith, a graduate of McMaster with an MBA from Schulich, is the manager for the store in Milton and the Human Resources ‘go-to’ person for the company. Kevin studied geography and music at York, but followed the path of Integrated Technology and manages the technology operations of the company.

Full-time employees in the Nobleton location now number 25, with the range of tenure between 1 and 41 years. Staff is hired, as often as possible, from the local area. The business is

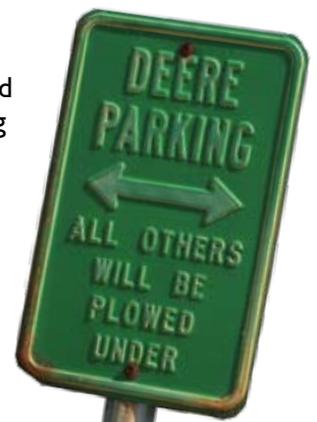
open Monday to Friday, and Saturday mornings, with flexibility in the case of emergencies, particularly for snow contractors, with the availability of 30 snow removal units for winter rental.

The Davis Family has always been actively involved in the Nobleton community. Over the years, they have been dedicated and generous supporters of the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Curling Club, Nobleton Victoria Day celebrations, the Schomberg Fair and Main Street Christmas, and other initiatives of local community groups. They are also sponsors of S.H.A.R.E. (Send Help And Resources Everywhere), an initiative of Peel Farmers.

Glenn Davis served as President of ORFEDA, now known as CEEDA (Canada East Equipment Dealers Association), in 1973. Karl held that position in 1993, and Keith is currently Treasurer.

The Product

Nobleton Farm Service expanded into the sale of equipment, beginning with tractors and hay equipment supplied by the Oliver Corporation of Charles City, Iowa. Whenever possible, quality products come from local manufacturers in Ontario and Quebec, which also makes access to parts for service needs more readily available.



Prosperous, innovative businesses that adapt to change from generation to generation contribute to a sustainable King.

GREEN TRACTORS



Products, from a variety of quality manufacturers, include everything from John Deere toys to clothing to large farm equipment and winter machinery. Stihl is popular for property maintenance, with saws for every need in both the residential and commercial sector. European lines, like Lemken and Deici, are available. Snow removal equipment and attachments have been included in the regular inventory, especially as the tractor has evolved over the last 10 years into a multi-tasking piece of machinery. Canadian sprayers and wood chippers are also on the list of products available, as well as John Deere equipment specifically dedicated to golf course property maintenance. A line of Honda products is a recent addition to the inventory.

Green Tractors offers knowledgeable and well-trained sales experience. Service technicians have ongoing virtual classroom training, in addition to 2 to 3 weeks per year with 2-way training programmes in a classroom setting in the board room. They provide regular maintenance and repairs to all the products. Training for repairs, operation and safety is also offered, especially for corporate clients.

The Performance

From November of 1956 to the early 1970's the business grew from 3 to 15 employees, expanding from equipment repairs to include sales, offering an increasing variety of products for use in more than just the agricultural sector, and significantly increasing the volume of both sales and service.

Since then, there have been many changes. In 1976, computer equipment was installed. The building on the King Road property was constructed in 1977. John Deere became the principle supplier to Nobleton Farm Service in 1985. There were outlets in Alliston and Pickering, with both closing in the late 1990's. The Davis Farm was farmed until the 1990's, with the Budweth's of Nobleton Feed Mill managing the hay crop. Purchases, partnerships, or mergers were initiated to include stores in Brampton (1992), Milton (2001), Omeme and Port Perry (2010), Earlton (2012), and Clow Farm Equipment of Kingston (2014), bringing the total to seven dealerships employing about 130 people, with Omeme and Nobleton being the largest. This created greater efficiency, more effective marketing, greater ability to better serve customers, and a greater variety of specialists and specialized products.

Local stores are unique, meeting the product and service needs specific to the local community. For example, Omeme Earlton and Kingston serve a predominantly agricultural market, while Nobleton, Halton and Brampton meet the needs of a diverse GTA community. A golf and turf division looks after the needs of golf



courses from the GTA to the Ottawa border. Communication among the stores is important, with regular contact through email, by telephone, and in-person meetings on a monthly basis. Strong customer support is provided through increased product and service specialization, plus access to larger parts and equipment inventories.

Sales have increased exponentially, with the agricultural demand being about 75% of sales in terms of dollar value. The business adjusts to the market fluctuating, to the machine technology changing, to the demands of local growers increasing, and to the warming climate affecting the growing season and crops being farmed.

From Nobleton Farm Service to Green Tractors Nobleton, three generations of the Davis Family have provided the King community and beyond with quality product and service in an industry that is constantly changing.



2075 King Road, King City,
Ontario CANADA L7B 1A1 www.king.ca

For business inquiries, contact: Jamie Smyth,
Economic Development Officer
905-833-4016 ecdev@king.ca