

Busse's Flowers moves to its new home

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One of the oldest businesses in Mount Prospect has re-opened in one of the oldest buildings in the village.

Paul Seils, who owns Busse's Flowers & Gifts Inc. with wife Linda (a member of the Busse family), said the business actually predates Mount Prospect, having opened up one year before the village's incorporation in 1917.

On Thursday, the shop, formerly located at 320 E. Northwest Hwy., officially opened for business at 100 E. Northwest Hwy., in the former home of Van Driel's Medical Surgical, at the northeast corner of Emerson Street and Northwest Highway.

Linda Seils said the business was started by her grandfather Fred Busse and great-grandfather Louis Busse.

"It opened as greenhouses," Linda said. "It was a wholesale greenhouse. They would grow flowers and ship them to Chicago to the market.

"My grandfather owned that whole block (at the original location). Three-quarters of it was the greenhouses. They started out as wholesale and then, as my parents (Harold and Carol Busse) got involved, they decided to expand the retail."

Linda said the shop moved to the 320 E. Northwest Hwy. location about 21 years ago.

But when Van Driel's moved to 720 E. Northwest Hwy., Paul and Linda eagerly grabbed the opportunity to lease the space.

"We had kind of wanted to get a little bit more downtown, closer to all the downtown action," Paul said.

Property taxes were another factor — the flower shop is leasing, as opposed to owning the property where the old shop was based.

"To our surprise, this became available right at the end of the year, when Van Driel's owner Max Ullrich retired," Paul said. "So we jumped at the chance."

Linda said she prefers the new location. "I like it here. I always wanted to be a flower and plant shop," she said. "I didn't want to carry a lot of collectibles and giftware and have a big shop. I wanted to be the little corner shop. So this is what I wanted."

On Thursday, although the place was officially open for business, construction was still going on, with the sound of sawing and hammering coming from the back of the store.

The display cooler has yet to arrive, but the storage cooler is in place, enabling to the store to get up and running.

"We couldn't really move until we got refrigeration," Paul said.

Paul said the product mix will change. "We're not going to be quite so much into the gifty things. It will be more floral oriented," he said, and more focused on wedding and party business.

Much will remain the same, including the two lovebirds, Annie and Perry — short for Annual and Perennial.

"That was my daughter's brainstorm," he said. "My daughter (Heather) is a major animal lover," who owns dogs, cats and horses. "She thought it would be kind of neat, with all the tropical plants, to have some birds."

For Paul, the move is something of a homecoming. Growing up in Mount Prospect, he remembers visiting Van Driel's as a child when it was a drug store and buying candy.

The building itself dates to the 1920s. Herbert Van Driel bought the store in 1943. Eventually Ullrich bought the store after Van Driel became ill (he died in 1970) and turned it into a successful medical and surgical supply store.