

Thomson's Independent Grocer

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den centre at Thomson's, she organizes their community room, "Upstairs at Thomson's." That is a room with a complete kitchen in the upstairs mezzanine and is used for community meetings as well as cooking and art classes.

The Thomsons have been in the Quinte area since 1990.

Bob Thomson has been in the grocery business for 25 years. He started out as a grocery clerk with Loblaws in West Hill and was later involved in opening and renovating stores across Ontario, including the first No Frills store and the first Loblaws Superstore.

In 1984, he joined the Canadian Forces Exchange System (CANEX) as manager of supermarket operations at CFB Borden. Following transfers to Alberta and Germany, Thomson was promoted to CANEX regional manager in 1990. He was in charge of CANEX operations at CFB Trenton as well as Kingston, Bermuda and Alert.

It was in this capacity that he was aboard the Hercules that crashed near Alert in October of 1991. The ensuing blizzard and 30-hour wait by survivors for rescue were subject of a book and a movie.

After a lengthy rehabilitation, he returned to his former duties. In 1996, he was awarded the Your Independent Grocer franchise in Trenton.

The Thomsons opened their new store at 293 Dundas St. East in February of 2000.

"Our store was one of the first of the new-design stores opened by the Loblaws Company," he said proudly.

They incorporated meals-to-go in their operation. As well as having a full-line grocery and pharmacy, they also have a section in their store devoted to flowers, stationery, books, magazines and gift items and another area for such general merchandise as furniture, bed and bath items, small appliances and toys.

Thomson said the time is right to sell the store and retire.

"We made a decision to leave this area and we are torn by that because we have made so many friends and people have been so supportive. But we feel it's the best decision in the longterm," he said.

"We also have a close connection with the air base because of the rescue involved in my ordeal and we will certainly miss our relationship with the base."

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