

Reid's Dairy

While thousands already visit the castle at Reid's every year, Armin Quickert wants to expand the dairy's unique entertainment centre

The scoop on Reid's Dairy

- Reid's Dairy opened in 1910 at Loyalist-Wallbridge Road.
- It was bought by Arthur Quickert in 1967. It is owned by Armin and Marilyn Quickert and operated with sons Stephen and David.
- It's located at 222 Bell Boulevard on the corner of Bell Boulevard and Sidney Street.
- It has 50 full-time workers and additional part-time people.
- It produces milk, milkshakes, ice cream, table cream and fruit drinks.
- It processes about three per cent of Ontario's fluid milk consumption.
- It also operate 20 retail outlets, The Milky Way, between Mississauga and Kingston.

'We are trying to be unique in the dairy business by offering customers more than just our products'

ARMIN QUICKERT HAS A vision to make his Reid's Dairy "a landmark on this planet."

In the next few years, the dairy at 222 Bell Boulevard will boast a complete family fun entertainment centre that will draw visitors from around the province, he says. "We are planning and investigating the economics of a larger scale family fun centre at our existing site. By the year 2000, we'll have it completed and it will be geared to all ages, year-round."

The proposed indoor entertainment centre is a natural progression for the operation that not only boasts the dairy and retail outlet, but a theme park as well, he believes.

"We are trying to be unique in the dairy business by offering customers more than just our products," he said.

Already, Reid's Dairy has become a city landmark with its castle-like construction, miniature train set inside the store, a mechanical cow that moos at the push of a button, gift and craft area, 95-foot tower, covered gazebo picnic area and the Loonie Ranch petting zoo.

A few months ago, the dairy also completed a 6,000-square-foot dry and frozen storage addition.

The Reid's Dairy property covers 30 acres north to Highway 401. Six acres are currently developed, thereby paving the way for the addition of an indoor family entertainment centre.

The dairy employs 50 full-time workers and additional part-timers.

Reid's Dairy has changed considerably since it was purchased by Quickert and his wife, Marilyn, in July 1967.

"When we arrived here, we had one horse-drawn wagon and six delivery trucks. We were strictly a door-to-door delivery dairy."

Reid's was one of three dairies in the city; the others were Roblin and Grills.

"Every Ontario community would mirror the image of Belleville with three or four dairies. We're now the last

independent processing dairy plant between Toronto and Ottawa from the about 50 that were in existence in that area 32 years ago."

And why the success of the local dairy?

"You're looking at three people who are determined to stay in business," said Quickert, referring also to his sons David (vice-president of marketing and sales) and Stephen (vice-president operations).

"It's the determination and love of our business which drives us," Quickert said.

Reid's Dairy processes an average of one million litres of milk every week and most of its milk comes from local farmers.

"We process a little under three per cent of Ontario's fluid market," he noted.

Besides processing milk, it manufactures ice cream, buttermilk, table creams, juices, drinks and mixes (for milk shakes and ice cream).

Besides supplying grocery stores with its products, Reid's Dairy has also established its own retail outlets. Appropriately, the 24 retail outlets between Mississauga and Kingston are dubbed The Milky Way.

The Oshawa outlet was the first to be renovated to resemble the Belleville operation, on a smaller scale. It has two towers, a train and mechanical cow and, of course, an ice cream parlor.

Over the past year, 13 of its outlets were also renovated with the same features except for the large tower "and the remaining 10 stores will be done over the next few years."

Quickert acknowledged his operation is readying itself for the future.

"We will be more competitive and we'll also provide something that is a unique twist to the dairy business."

Quickert said Reid's Dairy "is in a very good position to survive in such a competitive market as it's driven by the international trade agreements."

He adds confidently, "We'll be around for a while."

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