



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

BRENNAN HOLDINGS INC.

SHIRLEY and LESTER BRENNAN had accumulated more than 30 years of experience in the health industry and were both ready for a change of pace. In the fall of 1994, they left health care behind and joined with their elder son Joel to form Brennan Holdings Inc. Their entry into business ownership was a small town general store first established in 1912.

The old general store, now known as UpWest Market, remains a popular fixture in Springfield West, Prince Edward Island. Shelves are filled with groceries, home baked treats, hardware, videos and local crafts. Customers can also purchase gasoline and assorted oil products. With such a varied selection, the store offers a little something for almost any customer.

While renovating the building, the Brennans were able to preserve some of its unique historical details which add warmth to the store. Six months after they acquired the general store, the Brennans purchased the O'Leary Kwik-Mart just 10 minutes away. Together, these two ventures provide work for five members of the Brennan clan and three other full-time employees.

But the two stores provide more than jobs. They are also much appreciated community services. Rather than having to drive considerable distances to shop, residents can pick up supplies close to home. In addition, the Brennans continue to meet the needs of their regular shoppers by extending their hours of operation during the fishing, planting and harvest seasons when many of their customers have long work days. "It's a close community and our customers are like family," explains Lester. This is a great place to take a break or to drop in for a visit so you can catch up on the news."



Barrett and Mackay

The Brennans appreciate the flexibility that comes with owning a family business. "Your family and coworkers are always ready to juggle their own schedules if you need time off," says Shirley, "but on the other hand, when it's your business you usually

career, it may be the unpredictability of a regular salary.

"Your customers are the key to success," states Lester. "Take time to know them. And remember that total sales isn't the same thing as profit." Joel recommends thinking carefully

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always think about work. Especially when you live across the street!" "Sometimes," jokes Joel, "you pretty much have to leave town to take your mind off the business."

"It's a great opportunity to see your kids develop their skills," comments Shirley. "We know that one day Lester and I will back out of the business, so this is giving the kids time to learn about the business and develop their own strengths." If there is a downside to this idyllic second

about what you do. "Don't jump into the pool head first; go in feet first and work your way to the deep end. Develop a complete business plan and be prepared to make sacrifices. Above all else, believe in yourself."

The old general store in Springfield West supported families for generations. Now, thanks to the faith and commitment of the Brennan family, it continues to do just that.

The Brennans

WHERE TO REACH SHIRLEY, LESTER AND JOEL BRENNAN

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