

WEST END

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BUSINESS

Daniels Foods to host centennial celebration

Anniversary gala to include special sales, customer appreciation cookouts

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For a family-owned business to reach a centennial milestone over the span of four generations is a monumental achievement.

To do so in the hyper-competitive grocery business is particularly noteworthy, as such well-respected and once ubiquitous names as Milwaukee-based Kohl's Food Stores, national supermarket giant A&P and Chicago-based National Tea have all been winnowed from the marketplace into the history books.

Sentry-affiliated, family-owned Daniels Foods, operator of full service supermarkets at 681 Kenosha St. in Walworth and 2501 W. Court St. in Janesville, is not only surviving but thriving as its marks its 100th anniversary.

"It's a milestone that very few family companies enjoy," said third generation owner Terry Daniels, company president. "As you go through the generations, there are more family businesses that fail than succeed after the second, third, fourth generation. We've been very fortunate to continue to grow and have new family members come along and run the business."

Daniels Foods will be celebrating the centennial anniversary from Aug. 11-17 with a gala celebration that's slated to include special sales, in-store giveaways and raffle prizes.

Special customers appreciation brat and hot dog cookouts, served up by Terry Daniels and sons Blake and Tyler, will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 12 at the Janesville store and Saturday, Aug. 13 at the Walworth Store.

The iconic Oscar Mayer Wiernermobile (<https://khcmobile-tour.com/wiernermobile>) will



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Celebrating a century in the grocery business Aug. 11-17, third generation Daniels Foods owner Terry Daniels (center) and sons Tyler (left) and Blake Daniels (right), the fourth generation to head the company, collaboratively operate full service supermarkets in Walworth and Janesville. They are pictured in the produce department of the Walworth store, located at 681 Kenosha St. Said Terry Daniels of the business' 100th anniversary, "It's a milestone that very few family companies enjoy. We've been very fortunate to continue to grow and have new family members come along and run the business."

make a special appearance at Daniels Foods in Walworth on Thursday, Aug. 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"We want to give our thanks to our great, loyal customers and our communities," Tyler said of the anniversary celebrations, including "a super-hot ad" in today's edition of the Lake Geneva

Regional News featuring "a lot of very desirable ad items."

Added Blake, "We're very proud of our stores in Walworth and Janesville."

Centennial memories

Celebrating a century of providing quality service and groceries to its customers, fam-

ily-owned Daniels Foods has built a rich legacy across four generations.

Daniels Foods traces its beginnings to namesake Lawrence E. Daniels, who opened a store in Springfield with business partner Alain Vos in 1922.

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TOURISM

Midwest EV Circuit Tour

Multi-state partnership part of Clean Energy Plan

Gov. Tony Evers on Aug. 3 joined governors from Illinois, Indiana and Michigan in announcing a collaboration to build what's being billed as America's next iconic road trip route, one specifically designed for electric vehicle (EV) travel.

The Lake Michigan EV Circuit Tour will consist of a network of EV chargers spanning more than 1,100 miles of drivable shoreline around Lake Michigan.

The multi-state partnership will build out and maintain the EV chargers, as well as market the new eco-tourism attraction. A memorandum of understanding, signed by key officials from each state, laying out the specifics, is available at https://www.michigan.gov/leo/-/media/Project/Websites/leo/Lake_MI_Circuit_MOUdocx1.pdf.

"Making our beautiful coastal communities not only more accessible to EVs but protecting them through lower emissions is a win-win for Wisconsin," Evers said. "We're proud to support this multi-state partnership as we work to implement our first-ever Clean Energy Plan and continue our efforts to bolster Wisconsin's tourism industry."

Described as an electric Route 66, the Lake Michigan EV Circuit Tour will be a scenic route with reliable light duty vehicle charging options along the Lake Michigan coastline that targets charger installations at key coastal communities, lighthouse, and tourism attractions such as state parks, hospitality locations, breweries, vineyards, restaurants and other small businesses. Those new chargers will be tied together with existing charging infrastructure networks at large entertainment attractions in population centers

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WALWORTH

'It was great to see everybody that came and had a good time'

Fundraiser supports outreach activities

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Few food pairings say summer in the Badger State quite like sweet corn and brats, Wisconsin's culinary dynamic duo.

Nearly 2,000 hungry West End residents and visitors followed their noses Aug. 6 to the taste-tantalizing scent of roasting sweet corn and grilling bratwursts wafting from Devils Lake Park in Walworth, where the Geneva Lake West Rotary Club hosted its 61st annual fundraising Corn & Bratwurst Festival, held 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"It went really well—everybody had a great time," said Phill Klamm, 2022-2023 president of the 50-member club, which serves Walworth, Fontana and Williams Bay as an affiliate of Evanston, Ill.-based Rotary International, a global 1.4 million member humanitarian service organization. "It was great to see the community all come together and have all the different volunteers and the people attending, both locally and from out-of-town from all different areas, people passing through the area just stopping in or people who grew up in the area coming back for Corn & Brat. It's a good family event. It was great to see everybody that came and had a good time."

Geneva Lake West Rotary Club vice president Rich Hildebrandt, the club's 2022 Corn & Bratwurst Festival chairman, agreed.

"It's been a good day," he said.

Among those attending the 2022 Corn & Bratwurst Festival were Randy and Kathleen Scott of Lake Geneva, 7-year festival attendees who have both children and grandchildren living in Walworth.

"It's a good community event," Kathleen said.

"The food's excellent," Scott added.

Funds raised at the Corn & Bratwurst Festival, which typically nets between \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually, helps the Geneva Lake West Rotary Club



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The Geneva Lake West Rotary Club's popular annual Corn & Bratwurst Festival fundraiser, held Aug. 6 in Walworth, has been a seven-year tradition for Lake Geneva residents Randy and Kathleen Scott, who have children and grandchildren living in Walworth. The Scotts praised the festival as a "great community event" with "excellent" food.

support a variety of community services that benefit children, youth, senior citizens and the disabled, as well as other charitable organizations in the Geneva

Lake West area. The Geneva Lake West Rotary Club, also known as the

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HALESTORM
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Daniels

From B1

Daniels and Vos sold the Springfield store and purchased the Cox-Bennett General Store in Kansasville in 1923, with Vos selling his interest in the Kansasville store to Daniels in 1941. The Racine County store affiliated with Chicago-based IGA in 1932. Sons Jack and Robert Daniels took over ownership of the store in 1949, with Jack buying out Robert's ownership interest in the store in 1956.

Jack Daniels sold the Kansasville store and purchased the Baldwin IGA Food Market, 541 Kenosha St. in Walworth, in January 1960, with the business becoming known as Daniels Sentry Foods beginning that May. Daniels Foods' affiliation with Sentry, a Wisconsin-based chain of 11 independently owned and operated supermarkets, continues to this day.

Terry Daniels said his parents were attracted to relocate to Walworth by the opportunity presented to expand and grow the multi-generational family grocery business, noting the owner of Baldwin IGA was looking to retire and Sentry Foods was looking to expand its Wisconsin store footprint.

"The store in Kansasville was seven, eight thousand square feet, a small store, probably 10,000 at best," Terry recalled. "We had the opportunity to buy a store in Walworth where Community Chiropractic Center is now. Sentry was looking to expand, so they contacted my dad and said the Walworth store was available and wanted to know if he wanted to come to Walworth and take over the store."

Growing and evolving to meet the West End's grocery needs, Jack and Kay Daniels opened a new 16,000-square-foot Walworth location, their second, in November 1965 at 525 Kenosha St., today home to Aurora Health Center and the Walworth Public Library.

Daniels Sentry Foods was remodeled and expanded in 1974, 1983 and 1988, eventually growing into a 34,000-square-foot facility.

The current 52,000-square-foot flagship Daniels Foods store at 681 Kenosha St., opened by third generation owners Terry and Debi Daniels in March 1999, earned Green Grocer Certification for energy efficiency upgrades in February 2010, one of the first awarded in Wisconsin. A Daniels Express gas station and convenience store was opened at Daniels Foods in June 2008.

The Walworth supermarket underwent a multi-million dollar upgrade and renovation in 2020-2021. The store, along with the Janesville location, were also concurrently rebranded from Sentry Foods to Daniels Foods for a "more hometown" feel, even though the stores remain affiliated with Sentry.

"We built this store in 1999 and by 2022 we've basically replaced every piece of equipment in the store," Terry said. "We bought new signs and repainted the buildings. We gave them a whole fresh new look in preparation for our 100-year anniversary."

Over the years, the family has also operated Sentry grocery stores in Janesville, Elkhorn, Brodhead and Belleville. The 31,000-square-foot store on Janesville's west side opened in 1979.

Sentry-affiliated Daniels Foods today operates two full service supermarkets — 681 Kenosha St. in Walworth and 2501 W. Court St. in Janesville.

Lawrence Daniels' grandson, Terry Daniels, joined the family business in 1978, with great-grandsons Blake and Tyler Daniels, joining in 2009 and 2010 respectively, a business legacy now spanning four generations.

"They oversee both operations and are store directors for each of the stores," Terry said of Blake, 40, and Tyler, 37, both alumni of Reek Elementary School in the Town of Linn and Big Foot High School in Walworth. "They both share in different responsibilities for the stores. Tyler does a lot of wine and liquor buying and Blake is much more involved in the deli and the meat departments."

Both are proud to be the next generation stepping into the stewardship of the century-old, fourth generation business.

"We're going to do our best to keep the tradition going and, God willing, our children will fill in our footsteps," Blake said. "It's surreal. It's hard to wrap your head around sometimes. We're blessed and thankful for the continued support and success of this business. It's been a great ride. I'm very thankful to be a part of the family business and close to the family. I didn't always know this was where



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The Sentry-affiliated Daniels Foods store at 681 Kenosha St., in Walworth, pictured here, underwent a multi-million dollar upgrade and remodeling in 2020-2021. Family-owned Daniels Foods, which also operates a store in Janesville, will be celebrating its 100th anniversary Aug. 11-17 with special sales, giveaways and raffle prizes, as well as 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. customer appreciation cookouts on Friday, Aug. 12 in Janesville, and Saturday, Aug. 13 in Walworth.



DANIELS FOODS

Daniels Foods, today operating full service supermarkets in Walworth and Janesville, traces its history back 100 years to founder Lawrence E. Daniels in 1922. Daniels Foods is marking its centennial anniversary Aug. 11-17 with special sales, giveaways and raffle prizes, as well as 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. customer appreciation cookouts on Friday, Aug. 12 in Janesville and Saturday, Aug. 13 in Walworth.

I was gonna end up. I traveled the country for a time, lived other places, and found out that home was here and I wouldn't have it any other way."

Said Tyler of his own feelings, "I'm honored and blessed to be a part of the ride. It's been a great experience learning the business from both my father and grandfather, learning different traits and attributes from both of them. I hope to continue to fill their shoes and pass it on."

Particularly important are the family ties.

"We're both grateful to have a tight-knit family," Blake said. "We're all close, we've always gotten along. We're very fortunate to be able to work alongside one another and have it go smoothly. When you see so much separation and indifference in the world, it's kind of nice to have the family still together and stronger than ever."

A recipe for success

Terry credits Daniels Foods' longstanding success and growth, in part, to its independent status, which allows the company operate more nimbly than its corporate competitors.

"What has allowed us to be successful is that even though we are part of a group, Sentry, we are also very independently-thinking and always looking to do what's best for us and our markets," he explained.

Also helpful, he said, have been successful new ideas brought in by his sons, including the addition of sushi and premium Boar's Head meats and cheeses in the deli, and the installation of self-checkouts now used by 30% of Daniels Foods customers.

"We're trying to stay ahead of our competition and have our customer enjoy the shopping experience, drawing people in and making this a desirable spot, a destination spot, for people to come shop," Tyler said, citing Daniels Foods' emphasis on quality perishable departments and a "great" center store. "We all know you can buy groceries anywhere."

Another key to success, Terry said, is Daniels Foods' longtime community involvement in a variety of organizations and causes.

"We've been part of this community since 1960 and have been very involved," he said. "If there's a need, we're here to help, and I think that's true for a lot of our local businesses. We've been very



DANIELS FOODS

Daniels Foods relocated from Kansasville to Walworth in January 1960, after second generation owners Jack and Kay Daniels purchased the Baldwin IGA store at 541 Kenosha St. As seen here, the store was rebranded in May 1960 as it began its affiliation with Sentry Foods. Today, there are 11 independently owned and operated Sentry-affiliated stores in southern and central Wisconsin, including the Daniels Foods stores in Walworth and Janesville

supportive of the community and the community's been very supportive of us. There's a lot to be said for that."

Also contributing to Daniels Foods' success is noteworthy levels of employee retention in an industry known for its high rates of employee turnover.

"We have a lot of longtime employees," Terry said, himself with the family-owned company since he was a "young kid," noting Walworth store manager Bill Melson "grew up" with Daniels Foods, starting in the grocery business when he was 15. "We have a lot of long-term employees that are very loyal, which is what really makes the difference, I think. Long-term is having people that will stay with you and grow with you. We always try to promote within the store and we've had a lot of people move up the ranks as they started with us and continued with us."

Blake and Tyler agreed. "We have a great core group of employees that have gotten us through thick and thin," Tyler said.

Among them is Melson, who has logged 32 years with Daniels Foods, coming on board part-time in 1990 and full-time in 1994.

"For me, it's been a great experience," Melson said of his career with Daniels Foods. "I've had opportunities throughout the years. I started off stocking shelves and pushing carts and then I moved to a grocery manager position, then I was co-store manager and now store manager. They've treated me very, very well over the years. I couldn't be more happy with how they've treated me and all their associates here. They're always looking to promote from within and give individuals opportunities."

Other longtime employees include Bob Kellner, who started with Daniels Foods in 1997 and moved to the Janesville store when he became its manager in December 2019. Ken Riley, Daniels Foods' general manager, has been with the company 52 years, joining in 1970.

Blake said it's important to have a good rapport with employees — keeping up with their lives, knowing them on a first-name basis and checking in with them daily.

"Treating everyone like they're a part of the family and letting every voice be heard, that's something that's rare these days," he noted. "Having that one-on-one contact with staff and keeping it run like a giant family and feeling of home goes a long way."

Longevity at Daniels Foods starts at the top. Terry graduated

from college in 1974 and worked four years for Arthur Anderson as a certified public accountant before coming back to Walworth and joining the family business in 1978. Named Walworth store manager and vice president of Daniels Foods in 1979, Terry became president in 1989 and owner in 1992 when his dad retired.

Terry said the grocery industry "has changed dramatically" over the years, particularly with the rise of big box stores like Bentonville, Ark.-based Walmart, which surrounds the Walworth store at Harvard, Ill., Lake Geneva and Delavan, and the large Walmart, Target, Festival Foods, Sam's Club and Woodman's stores that compete with Daniels Foods' store in Janesville, where a 100,000-square-foot HyVee is currently being built.

Terry said Daniels Foods deftly competes with the "big gorilla" big box operators by offering "a different shopping experience" based on an old-fashioned emphasis full service deli, meat and bakery departments and "local touch" friendly, attentive customer service among other "key" differentiators, including a deep and longstanding commitment to community involvement that he calls "building a marketplace where you're really a part of the community."

High marks

Daniels Foods' flagship full-service supermarket in Walworth is a favorite with area residents and visitors alike.

Customer John Shay of Evanston, Ill., visiting his parents in Fontana, stopped at Daniels Foods recently to pick up a variety of fixings to make a fun taco bar.

"I love it," he said of the store. "I've been coming here since it was Sentry way back in the late 1980s. The layout's really clean. Great selection. The produce section is wonderful. You can find stuff here that you're not gonna find at Walmart or Aldi. And everyone who works here seems to know where everything is anytime I have a question. Shopping here has always been a great experience."

Shay also likes the store's emphasis on sourcing local foods whenever possible, calling it "vital" in importance.

"I'm sure you can get stuff shipped in from just about anywhere else in the country these days," he said. "The fact you can get local meat, local produce, local dairy — you can't beat that."

A perennial family favorite, he said, are the store's homemade

Daniels Kitchen pizzas.

"The homemade pizzas have always been a hit from way back in the day," Shay noted. "Whenever I head over here I always get bombed for requests."

Jennifer Krisch of Lake Geneva is among Daniels Foods' newer customers, making it her store of choice for the past two years.

"I like how everything is always really fresh and that the store is really organized, clean and tidy, and close to home," she said. "Everybody's really friendly and helpful. Especially here at the deli, they're very kind and patient."

The "Daniels Foods Difference"

Terry Daniels, a firm believer in "The Daniels Foods Difference," said the Walworth and Janesville supermarkets have been a huge success, in large part because of their mission emphasis on providing customers with quality, service and value through plentiful selections of competitively-priced top brands, high-quality fresh meat and produce, friendly and attentive customer service, and full-service meat, bakery and deli departments.

In an era where pre-packaged foods have become the norm in the grocery industry, Daniels Foods differentiates itself from the competition with its old-fashioned full service deli, bakery and meat departments.

"Most grocery stores today, the meats all come in pre-packaged," he noted. "We still cut our own meat. Same thing in the deli — we prepare a majority of our salads, slice our own meats and cheeses. And we bake a lot of things in the bakery."

Daniels Foods, known for the "Best Meat in Town," offers its customers the highest quality and freshest seafood around, including a full-service fresh seafood counter at the Walworth store and the capability of getting fresh fish daily. Experienced butchers will personally cut and trim meats to a customer's specific needs. And butchers at both stores also make fresh homemade Italian sausage and a wide variety of Sheboygan-styled bratwursts.

The Daniels Foods produce departments offer a wide array of the best fruits and vegetables available, including organic selections that are growing in popularity with shoppers. The stores also offer a convenience selection of cut fruit and vegetables. And for special events, Daniels Foods offers made-to-order fruit baskets and bouquets.

The Daniels Kitchen delicatessen at the flagship store in Walworth offers cut-to-order premium Boar's Head deli meats and cheeses, sushi, rotisserie chicken, hot food and salad bars, and a variety of homemade pizzas, sandwiches and paninis. Daniels Kitchen in Walworth also offers deli platters and catering services.

Online shopping options

Keeping up-to-date with the latest in grocery shopping trends, both Daniels Foods stores offer convenient online shopping options that provide customers a faster, simpler way to shop.

"A lot of people are shopping online," Terry said. "Online's become a big, big part of the business. We have our own employees picking the groceries and they're very particular about getting the right produce, the right meats, the right deli products. At the end of the day, that's been very successful because the consumer is very happy with the product they get at home."

The Walworth store offers a Click & Pick service where customers shop online for groceries and select their pickup time and payment method. To pick up their groceries, customers park in the designated Click & Pick drive through, and their order is brought out to them. Orders can now also be delivered as well and Click & Pick partnered with DoorDash.

Daniels Foods' Janesville location, meanwhile, now offers its customers on-demand grocery delivery through the EatStreet food delivery app with no delivery fee and the convenience of delivery in as little as an hour.

Learn more

Daniels Foods operates full-service Sentry-affiliated supermarkets at 681 Kenosha St. in Walworth and 2501 W. Court St. in Janesville. Both locations are open daily from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, call the Walworth store at 262-275-0458 or the Janesville store at 608-752-0501, or visit online at <https://www.danielsfoods.com>.

The website includes links to online versions of each store's weekly Thursday-Wednesday sales flyer.