



LEBANON DAILY NEWS — KATHY HACKLEMAN

From left, Samuel Wengert, Scott Miller and Sam Wengert pose inside Wengert's Home Center. Sam and his father, Ken, opened the business in October 1981 in an old dairy on Pine Street. They moved across the street to their current location at 101 E. Pine St. in the late 1980s.

Wengert's keeps it in the family

A like-named father and son opened the Cleona business in 1981. Now there are three of them.

By KATHY HACKLEMAN
For The Daily News

CLEONA — Wengert's Home Center is what you would call a "family business."

There's Samuel Kenneth Wengert Sr., known as Ken; Samuel Kenneth Wengert Jr., known as Sam; and Samuel Kenneth Wengert III, known as Samuel.

Confused? You wouldn't be the only one. The men are accustomed to taking each other's calls and getting each other's mail. All three work at the family business, although partially retired Ken has cut back on his hours. Both Sam and Samuel are full-time. The Wengerts also employ three others: Scott Miller, who works in

sales; Adele Smey, their bookkeeper; and Scott Bailey, who works mostly in delivery and the warehouse.

Ken and Sam opened the business in October 1981 in an old dairy on Pine Street. Although they moved across the street to their current location at 101 E. Pine St. in the late 1980s, they still have their first building, which is now used as a warehouse.

According to Sam, the business caters to remodelers. Although they do some work with builders, their main focus is on providing materials for remodels. In addition to selling home-improvement products, they also do installation. Big sellers are replacement windows, doors, siding, railings and metal roofs, along with complete kitchens and baths.

Wengert's is affiliated with Do It Best, the second-largest home-improvement cooperative in the United States after only Ace, meaning employees have access to between 75,000 and 80,000 products. So if there's a specific prod-

If you go

Wengert's Home Center can be reached at 273-8131. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

uct you have in mind and Wengert's doesn't stock it, most likely they can get it for you.

According to Sam, the business's catch phrase is, "A little out of the way, a lot less to pay." Although Wengert's might not have the lowest price on a specific item, Sam said, he encourages remodelers to think about the entire project before choosing a supplier.

"We give advice and try to find the best product for the job," he said. "Our philosophy is that we may not necessarily be the least expensive, but we are the best value when you consider price plus quality. We focus on better quality for a reasonable price."

But what really sets Wengert's

apart from its competition, according to Sam, is the personal service and knowledge that a customer receives.

"We get to know our customers and their families," Sam said. "If you have been in here more than a couple of times, we'll recognize your face and get to your name and the projects you are working on."

And that's what he likes about operating his own business.

"I like being a small business," Sam said. "I like getting to know the people, not just selling them a product and getting them out the door. That's my reward, developing friendships, being a part of the community."

Sam was born and raised in Cleona and has lived here all of his life, with the exception of five years when he lived in nearby West Lebanon Township.

As far as future plans go, the Wengerts are talking about remodeling their own showroom and plan to add a larger "bargain area" that will feature surplus items and special buys.