CO-OP 04/13/2016 M. KINNEY

 As consumers become more conscious of where their food comes from, stores like the Whole Earth Grocery Co-op in River Falls are becoming easier to find in communities. To keep up with a regional trend, Whole Earth got a makeover last month and so far it’s been a big success. Molly Kinney has the story.

MP3 RUNS 1:22 O/C: STD.

KINNEY: WHOLE EARTH C0-OP LOOKS A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN IT DID A FEW WEEKS AGO. NEW FLOORING, LIGHTING, AND CEILING TILES WERE INSTALLED, AND THE SHELVING REARRANGED. WHOLE AND NATURAL FOOD STORES ARE BECOMING MORE PREVALENT, GENERAL MANAGER EVAN SAYRE SAID, AND THE CO-OP SIMPLY DECIDED IT NEEDED TO UNDERGO ITS OWN RENOVATIONS TO KEEP UP.

SAYRE: THE REMODEL IS VERY MUCH THE TREND, CURRENT TREND, A TREND IN COOPS AT LEAST ACROSS THE MIDWEST. ALMOST ALL OF THEM ARE REMODELING OR GROWING OR MOVING OR MAKING SOME DRAMATIC CHANGE. THE PACKAGED FOOD THEY CAN DO AS WELL AS WE CAN, BUT THEY CAN’T DO LOCAL PRODUCE AND LOCAL SUPPLIERS LIKE WE CAN.

KINNEY: THE EMPLOYEES OF WHOLE EARTH DID MOST OF THE WORK THEMSELVES, LITERALLY OVERNIGHT. MIKA (MEEK-a) LAMBERT, A CASHIER AT WHOLE EARTH, WAS PART OF THE PROCESS. SHE SAID THE THOUGHT IT WOULDN’T BE POSSIBLE TO GET DONE BY THEMSELVES.

LAMBERT: IT WAS A REALLY HARDCORE PROCESS. EVERYONE WAS SUPER TIRED AND IT WAS SUPER LONG. I DIDN’T THINK IT’D BE POSSIBLE TO DO IN TWO DAYS, IT JUST HAPPENED AND LIKE WE HAD EMPLOYEES WHO WORKED REALLY REALLY HARD, I MEAN LIKE BARLEY SPELT AND THEN WORKED NEXT SHIFTS AND IT WAS LIKE REALLY INTENSIVE PROCESS AND VERY HARD WORK AND LIKE VERY ADMIRABLE THAT WE DID THAT IN SUCH LITTLE TIME.

KINNEY: SAYRE SAID WHOLE EARTH WILL LIKELY HOST AN OFFICIAL GRAND RE-OPENING PARTY SOMETIME IN EARLY MAY, AND DETAILS WILL BE RELEASED IN THE COMING WEEKS. FOR FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M MOLLY KINNEY.

 Information on the party and other Whole Earth events will be found on its Facebook page or at whole earth grocery dot co-op.

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