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ROOTED IN LEGACY: COLDWATER SEED & SUPPLY CONTINUES OVER A CENTURY OF GROWING TRADITION

By: Vallean Jackson

Coldwater Seed & Supply has been at the heart of the community for over 100 years, supporting generations of families and businesses with care and outstanding service. As the oldest seed store in Alabama, it remains a place where tradition takes root and the spirit of Tuscumbia continues to grow. Its historic presence stands as more than a landmark, but a place of nostalgia and connecting the community.

Owners Larry and Kim Lewis understand firsthand what this store means to others because of what it means to them personally. Larry recalls one of his fondest memories from childhood—visiting the store with his grandfather to buy seeds. So when it was brought to his attention that Coldwater Seed & Supply might close, he knew it was something he couldn't let happen. For Larry, saving the store wasn't just about preserving a business; it was about protecting a piece of his own history and the shared memories of so many others in the community.

"Since taking over as owner, we have carried on the traditions of the seed store, and I was told that every owner adds something different. We've continued that tradition by expanding our inventory and the things we offer," said Larry.

"In adding our own touch to the store's tradition, we now offer honey, which was something the community had been asking for. We also have bees in the back of the store, bee supplies, Mine Lab metal detecting gear, and we're the largest Case Knife dealer in the Shoals," added Jennifer Bennetch, store manager.

Bennetch shared that aside from adding products to the inventory, they also provide services such as shelling peas and pecans—something specifically helpful to the community, especially around the holidays. She believes this kind of service adheres to its long standing mission of meeting the needs of the community.

Coldwater Seed & Supply has been around since the early 1920s, but has steadily evolved and blended. Each new addition reflects the team's effort to keep the business relevant without losing the warmth and familiarity that generations have cherished.

"It's more than just a store...it's a place where people come for memories, a connection point for people in the community, and it has so much character— from the many faces that come into the store to Jennifer and the team," said Larry.

"And you can't forget Rosie, our store cat, who has become a customer favorite," added Bennetch.

Home isn't just where you're from, but where you feel like you belong, and for many the seed store has been a safe haven of connections for decades. Bennetch says one of her favorite parts of the job is working in a place that makes her feel like she's lived her whole life in Tuscumbia. Living vicariously through customers' stories, both past and present. She feels grateful to be a part of something so meaningful. She believes that kind of connection takes customer service to another level. One that keeps people coming back and the store's legacy alive.

"When people hear the name Coldwater, I hope people think of tradition, heritage, and a resource for the community. We've been a part of the community for over 100 years, and we hope to be here for another hundred, keeping the legacy alive for future generations," said Larry.

Coldwater Seed & Supply is located at 108 E 6th St. in Downtown Tuscumbia. The store is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and closed Sunday. Larry and Bennetch both agree that it's important to meet customers where they are, which is why they're working to expand customers' shopping experience and strengthen their online presence.

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