

Hy-Vee Historical Timeline, June 2015

Celebrating Hy-Vee History

In 85 years, Hy-Vee has transformed from a small supply store in rural Iowa with a handful of employees to a major retailer with 236 supermarkets and more than 76,000 employees throughout eight states. Take a look at some of the significant historical events that have shaped who we are today.

1930

Charles Hyde and David Vredenburg form a partnership and open the Beaconsfield Supply Store (Iowa).

1933

The pair introduce profit sharing and autonomy to store managers after opening the Princeton Supply Store (Missouri).

1936

David Vredenburg's son, Dwight, who manages the Centerville (Iowa) store, extends profit-sharing benefits to every employee at his store.

"We are the only company that we know of in the retail industry that shares with its people the amount of profits that we do." – Ron Pearson

1938

Hyde & Vredenburg is incorporated, and Dwight Vredenburg becomes its first president.

1940

The Centerville store reopens with cutting-edge additions: a frozen food case, fluorescent lights, background music and shopping carts.

1945

Hyde & Vredenburg, Inc., purchases the Chariton Wholesale Grocery Company and moves its headquarters from Lamoni, Iowa, to Chariton, Iowa.

To encourage hesitant Centerville customers to use the new carts, Dwight Vredenburg tosses in candy bars and packs of chewing gum as an incentive.

1949

Centerville opens a new "drive-in" store – the first to offer carryout service and self-service meats.

Dwight Vredenburg

Hy-Vee's first president, who took over at just 23 years old, motivated every employee to focus on customer service. During his 45-year tenure as president, Dwight Vredenburg transformed

Hy-Vee from a corner grocery store to a modern supermarket chain.

1952

Three people suggest "Hy-Vee" in a contest to rename the Supply and Service stores.

1956

Hy-Vee adopts a new logo for its new name.

Hy-Vee introduces its first private-label products: canned coffee and fresh milk.

1957

The first in-store bakery opens at the Iowa City No. 1 (Iowa) store.

1960

Fort Madison (Iowa) is the first store to have a courtesy counter and laundromat services.

The Hy-Vee Employees' Trust is created and becomes a primary stockholder, making every fund participant an indirect stockholder.

1963

The Hy-Vee Employees' Trust purchases the National Bank & Trust Company of Chariton.

The "Helpful Smile in Every Aisle" slogan makes its radio and television debut. Hy-Vee is one of the first grocers in the nation to use television for advertising.

1964

The first Service Award Dinners are held, honoring 406 employees for their service.

1967

The first in-store delicatessen opens at the Des Moines No. 2 store.

1969

The first Drug Town opens in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, bringing Hy-Vee into the pharmacy business.

Hy-Vee merges with Cherokee, Iowa-based Swanson Stores, Inc., and gains 12 new stores, an office-distribution complex and presence in a new state: Minnesota.

"The 'helpful smile' slogan has survived more than 50 years because our employees fulfill that promise. It's more than just a saying." - Ric Jurgens

1975

Hy-Vee now owns stores in four states. Its newest state, South Dakota, welcomes the first Hy-Vee store in Brookings.

1977

Norfolk No. 1 is the first Hy-Vee store to open in Nebraska.

1978

Dwight Vredenburg is elected chairman and chief executive officer.

1979

The first Hy-Vee in Illinois opens in Macomb.

1982

Hy-Vee establishes Perishable Distributors of Iowa (POI) as an affiliate of the company.

1983

Ron Pearson, Hy-Vee's chief operating officer, succeeds Dwight Vredenburg as president.

1985

Lincoln No. 4 (Nebraska) becomes Hy-Vee's first combination food and drugstore with more company firsts: a self-service salad bar, cheese and deli counters and a self-service bakery.

1988

The opening of the Overland Park No. 1 (Kansas) store marks Hy-Vee's entry into its seventh state and largest metropolitan area: Kansas City.

1989

Dwight Vredenburg retires and Ron Pearson succeeds him as chairman and chief executive officer. During Vredenburg's 50-year tenure, Hy-Vee grew from 15 to 164 stores.

1990

Hy-Vee establishes Perishable Distributors of Iowa as a subsidiary and purchases Lomar Distributing.

1992

Two important company purchases are made: D&D Salads (now D&D Foods) and Florist Distributing. Both become Hy-Vee subsidiaries.

The first Chinese Express opens in Missouri at the Independence No. 1 store.

1994

Hy-Vee modernizes its 30-year-old logo and adds that the company is employee-owned.

Hy-Vee launches the Hy-Vee Employees' 401 (k) plan to encourage employees to save for retirement.

1995

The National Bank & Trust Company changes its name to Midwest Heritage Bank, which opens its first store branch at the Ames No. 1 (Iowa) Hy-Vee the following year.

Hy-Vee's corporate offices move from Chariton to West Des Moines, and the corporate name changes to Hy-Vee, Inc.

Hy-Vee establishes the Road of Gold program to encourage safe driving.

Hy-Vee/Weitz Construction Company is formed.

Ron Pearson

Ron Pearson built upon Dwight Vredenburg's legacy by catering to the needs of the contemporary customer. He focused on convenience, enhancing in-store departments and adding on-site gas stations, dry cleaning services and dine-in or takeout meal areas.

Ric Jurgens

Hy-Vee has its third leader to thank for its reputation for healthy living. Under Ric Jurgens, the company established the Hy-Vee Triathlon, began adding in-store medical clinics and created a Hy-Vee Health Team led by pharmacists, certified pharmacy technicians and dietitians.

1996

Hy-Vee launches a company website.

1997

The first "21st Century" store, which has more room for general merchandise, opens at the Mankato No. 2 (Minnesota) Hy-Vee.

The first Hy-Vee Gas opens at the Davenport No. 3 (Iowa) store.

1998

Midwest Country Fare replaces the lots of Value private-label product line.

The Hy-Vee Employees' Trust Fund and the 401(k) plan merge to form the Hy-Vee Employees' Profit-Sharing Trust Fund and 401(k) Plan. Participants have ownership in Hy-Vee stock.

1999

Hy-Vee begins stocking Hy-Vee Grand Selections, a premium private-label brand.

2000

Hy-Vee switches the red and white colors on the logo it introduced in 1994. This updated version of the logo is still used today.

Health Market private-label products are introduced.

2001

The HealthMarket department is introduced at the new Columbia No. 1 (Missouri) store.

2003

Ric Jurgens is elected Hy-Vee's chief executive officer.

2005

Hy-Vee's first in-store clinic opens at the Davenport No. 5 (Iowa) Hy-Vee.

2006

Ric Jurgens is elected chairman of the board. Ron Pearson is elected chairman emeritus. The Hy-Vee Legendary Customer Service Award is established. Each year, 10 exemplary employees are inducted into the Customer Service Hall of Fame.

2007

The first Hy-Vee Triathlon takes place.

2008

Hy-Vee introduces its first mission statement: Making lives easier, healthier, happier.

2009

Randy Edeker becomes Hy-Vee's fourth president. He succeeds Ric Jurgens, who remains chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

Hy-Vee enters Wisconsin, its eighth state, with the opening of the Madison No. 1 store.

Hy-Vee becomes the exclusive grocer sponsor of the Kansas City Chiefs.

Hy-Vee and Amber Pharmacy, an Omaha, Nebraska-based specialty pharmacy company, partner to form Hy-Vee Pharmacy Solutions.

2010

Hy-Vee introduces the Ronald D. Pearson Citizenship Award to honor employees for volunteer work.

2012

Hy-Vee introduces the Fuel Saver™ program, which rewards certain store purchases with discounts on gas.

Randy Edeker succeeds Ric Jurgens as CEO and chairman of the board following Jurgens' retirement.

2013

Hy-Vee forms a new subsidiary, Hy-Vee Construction, after the purchase of its share of Hy-Vee/Weitz Construction.

Hy-Vee begins adding Market Grilles and Cafes to stores.

2014

Amber Pharmacy joins the Hy-Vee family as its seventh subsidiary, creating a wealth of opportunities for the company in the specialty pharmacy field.

2015

Hy-Vee re-platforms online grocery shopping companywide.

"Our focus for the past 85 years on service, caring and adapting to lifestyles will help us move forward and succeed in the future." - Randy Edeker

Randy Edeker

Under Randy Edeker's leadership, we've reimagined in-store dining with Market Grilles and Market Cafes, engaged with customers using social media and moved into our largest market the Twin Cities (Minnesota). We look forward to watching his legacy grow in the years to come.