

THE PERFECT SPOT

Iowa 80's Journey From
Iowa Cornfield To World's Largest Truckstop



Iowa 80: Safe Haven in Bad Weather

For 40 years, Iowa 80 Truckstop has been a place where truckers and travelers could take care of a variety of needs with one pleasant stop. They could fuel up, have repairs made, eat dinner, shop, visit a barber or dentist and much more.

But the World's Largest Truckstop also has been a safe haven during storms, particularly the winter blizzards Iowa can serve up now and then.

Shirley Giebelstein, who has worked at Iowa 80 Kitchen for nearly 40 years, remembers a bad snowstorm in the early 1970s. A woman who worked as a cashier at

the time was diabetic and out of insulin. "Some of the drivers took it upon themselves to go into Davenport and get her insulin," says Shirley.

"They're good to us," she says of the drivers. "Most of them are very nice."

Shirley and everyone else who has spent more than a few years around Iowa 80 remembers the big snowstorm in the winter of 1978-79. It hit in December. "There was tons and tons of snow," says Iowa 80 Kitchen owner-operator Bill Peel. "Nobody could move. The lot was just plugged."

He says there were way too many

people in the building for its size during the snow emergency, "but where else were they going to go?"

Restaurant manager Wayne Meincke and his wife had bought a house in Walcott shortly before the snowstorm hit. He can't remember if it was a Friday or a Saturday, but "I happened to be off that day, and they came and got me with a snowmobile." Meincke says he then worked two days straight.

Hundreds and hundreds of people were stranded at the truckstop. But they were warm and safe. "You took care of them during the day and about 8 or 9 o'clock at night, they just kind of drifted off," says Wayne, whose wife opened up their house so waitresses, who were transported back and forth in four-wheel drive trucks, could get five or six hours' sleep between shifts.

"I came to work on Saturday morning and didn't leave until



Carolyn Moon stands beside her car along County Road Y-40 in Walcott - 1978.