

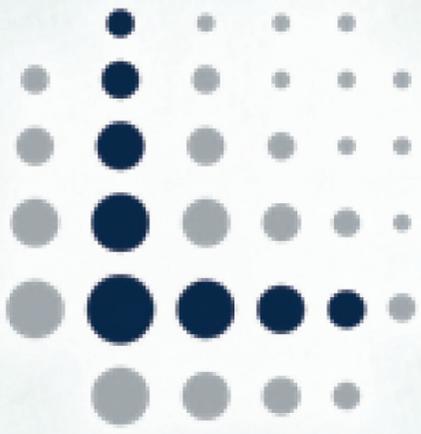


A PART OF PERRY COUNTY HISTORY

Rozier's Mercantile has been in business since 1903, through five generations of the Lottes family. Since opening its doors 120 years ago, the one-time general store has expanded its operations into three locations in two states, employing more than 220 employees in its department store, three supermarkets and a hardware store.

"I'm thankful to the citizens of Perryville and Perry County," said Rozier's president Jay Lottes Jr. "Because of them and our employees, we've been able to succeed for 120 years. That is truly an accomplishment."



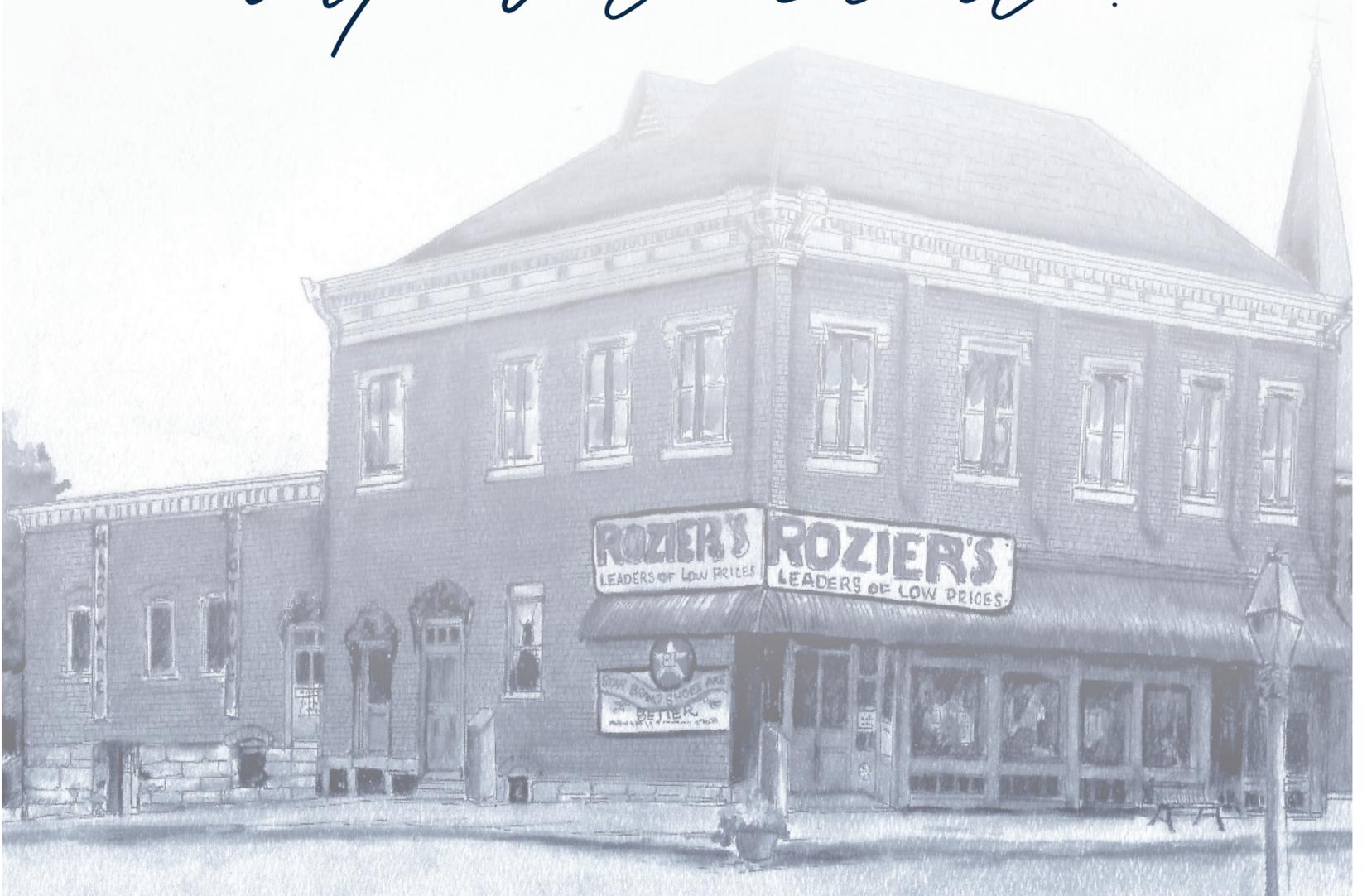


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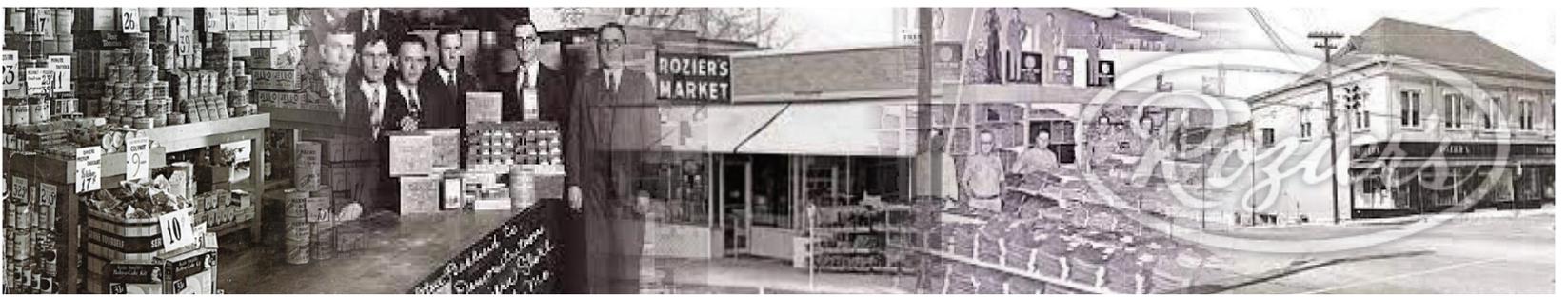
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ROZIERS has 'STAYING POWER' as it celebrates 120 years!

By Justin Hotop
jhotop@perryvillemews.com

Rozier's Mercantile, a Perry County icon, is another year older, but it's no ordinary anniversary. This year marks the 120th anniversary of the Perryville mainstay.

"We are just very thankful to make it 120 years," said Rozier's President Jay Lottes Jr., who has been with the business for 42 years. "Rozier's has been around in some areas such as Ste. Genevieve, Jackson, Farmington, and other surrounding areas for a long time. It's been quite the ride over all these years."

Rozier's history dates back to the early 19th century. Jean Ferdinand Rozier immigrated to the United States from France in 1806. His father, Francois Claude Rozier, arranged a contract with Lieutenant Jean Audubon, father of the French American naturalist and painter John Audubon, to send their sons to the U.S. to go into business together and avoid having to fight in the Napoleonic Wars.

Rozier and Audubon started working Audubon's land in Pennsylvania. They traveled down the Ohio River, selling and trading goods and opened general stores in Kentucky and Ste. Genevieve.

Rozier decided to settle in Ste. Genevieve, while Audubon bought out of the business and moved back east in 1811. Rozier married Constance Roy in 1813. The couple eventually had 10 children.

Jules Rene Rozier, one of their sons, followed in his father's footsteps and opened general stores in the Ste. Genevieve area. After several attempts, he was finally successful in St. Mary, where there was a riverboat landing that made it easy to get goods from St. Louis and New Orleans.

Jules' sons, Jules Jr. and Pratte, worked at the St. Mary store for some years.

Rozier's & Sons Mercantile established itself in the sparsely populated area, not only by providing goods but also by purchasing produce from farmers, which they shipped up the river to St. Louis.

In 1875, around the same time Jules Rozier opened his St. Mary store, Eberhart and Rose Lottes settled in the area. They arrived with a Lutheran settlement, although the family is Catholic, and eventually settled in St. Mary.



TOP: Jell-O, coffee and cocoa are among the items for sale at Rozier's in this undated photograph. BOTTOM: A product demonstration for Isten's Fairy Crackers at Rozier's Store on April 19, 1930.

1806

Jean Ferdinand Rozier immigrates to the United States from France with John Audubon. The two move south down the Ohio River, settling in Ste. Genevieve, and opening general stores there and in Louisville, Ky.

1874

Jules Rene Rozier, son of Ferdinand, opens a general store in St. Mary, Rozier & Company. His sons, Jules Rozier Jr. and Pratte A. Rozier, work there for some years.

1897

February: Mr. T.L. Phillips lets contract for \$6,000 Opera House on Northeast corner of square. Building is to be 45x65 ft. with three business rooms below. Charles Kiefner is the contractor.

Sept. 24: The Opening Ball at Phillip's New Opera House was an event that will be long remembered by the people of Perryville. 1903

Aug. 21: Rozier Mercantile Co. incorporated in the State of Missouri.

Aug. 29: Grand Opening Sale in the Phillips Building.

1900

John F. Lottes starts to work for Jules Rozier & Sons Mercantile at the St. Mary store.

1903

Rozier's Mercantile Co., opens in Perryville.

1917

January: Rozier Mercantile buys the building from Thomas L. Phillips.

Dec. 19: First President of Rozier Mercantile Co. Pratte A. Rozier dies.

1918

January: John F. Lottes elected President of Rozier Mercantile Co.

1923

Construction of second floor warehouse addition.

1955

Air conditioning was installed for customer comfort.

1954

Meat department of Rozier's Super Market is enlarged.

1953

The new supermarket is built, and the variety and fabric departments are remodeled.

1936

Extensive store-wide remodeling is undertaken.

1934

Sprinkler system installed throughout the building for fire protection.

May the journey of corporate success continue even more in the coming years!

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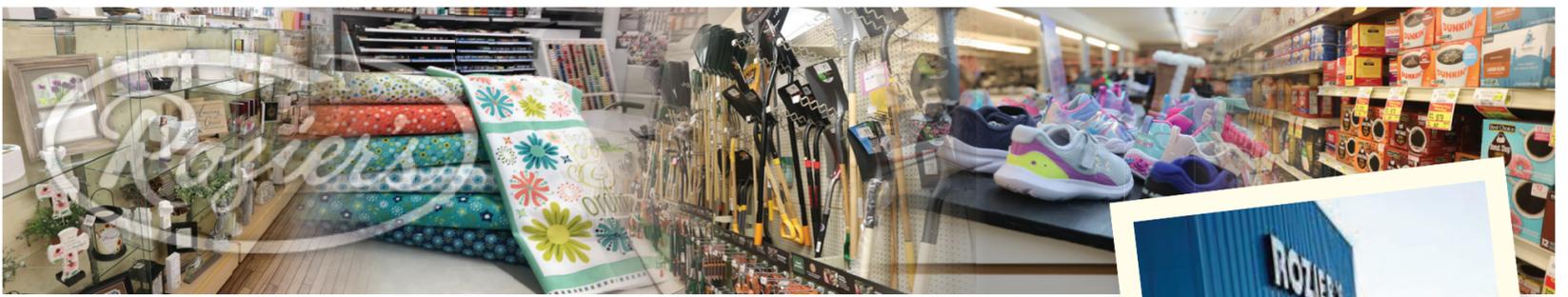
COMPANIES

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1956

First union contract with employees is approved. Preusse property in back of grocery is purchased.

1959

Joseph Modde property across from Post Office is purchased for parking. New siding was installed on the department store.

1960

Pat Faherty lot across from grocery department (now True Value quarters) is purchased.

1963

Construction of new area over grocery for ladies department.

1967

The Poll Parrot Money Reward Program was replaced with the Eagle Stamp Program.

1968

January 5th: John F. Lottes, second President of Rozier Mercantile, dies.

1974

Purchase of the Scott property. Company joins the Hardware Buying Cooperative Cotter & Co., known as True Value.

1979

Remodel and construction of 30 x 125 addition to grocery

1982

Company changes grocery supplier from Associated Grocers to Associated Wholesale Grocers and builds new grocery warehouse.

1983

Extensive remodel of ladies and men's departments is completed.

The Lottes' son, John F. Lottes Sr., began working at Rozier & Sons Mercantile after graduating from Perkins and Herpel Business College in St. Louis.

In 1903, the business expanded to Perryville, with Lottes moving to work at the new Rozier's Mercantile Co.

He married Louise A. Elder of Perryville in 1906, and they eventually had seven children together. The couple bought the store in 1918, following the death of Pratte Rozier.

Lottes continued to expand the Rozier's business in Perryville and helped bring larger businesses to the area, such as International Shoe in 1925. Upon his death in 1968, local papers said he was Perryville's "number one citizen."

An article in the Perry County Republican described him as someone completely focused on the business, saying, "One could be talking to him and still know that the wheels of the store were turning in his mind."

TOP: From left, Jay Lottes Jr., Maggie Hotop, Karen Lundy, James Lottes, Jay Lottes Sr., Charles Lottes, Renee Stratman and Brad Lottes pose for a portrait in front of Rozier's Food Centre.

MIDDLE: The main entrance of Rozier's True Value is on East North Street in Perryville, behind Rozier's Department Store.

BOTTOM: Rozier's Department Store has been located at the corner of North Main and Ste. Marie Street since 1903.



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This work ethic and dedication, along with strong family values, are just a few things Lottes passed down the family line. Much like the store's founder, who opened several general stores throughout the 1920s, the Lotteses have continued to expand their business, purchasing grocery stores in Ste. Genevieve in 1999 and Chester in 2002.

All that continues to today, which even extends to the family itself.

"We have first, second, third, and fourth generations here," Lottes said. "We have two fifth generations with my daughter and Brett Schamburg, and Brad's daughter working here as well. I think it has been great for the family and the community to stay downtown because I think that's how small businesses in towns like this can thrive. Businesses sometimes move out by the interstate and while there may be more traffic out there, but we always wanted to keep it as close to downtown as we could."

Cousin Jim Lottes, 72, a former company president and head of the men's department said the decision to stay downtown benefitted the entire city.

"A lot of it is tradition to keep people coming to town," Jim said. "Years ago, the whole downtown was booming. People would come to town and stay all day. You don't really see that today. It looks nice, but there's not as much retail business."

While some things have stayed the same, much as changed over the past 120 years, particularly in terms of technology.

At Rozier's, shoppers may find anything from bolts of fabric in the sewing department to home decorations, shoes and even paint at the nearby Rozier's True Value.

1985

Purchase of Radio Shack franchise from Kiefner Lumber Co. Remodel "Scotty's Dance Hall" for larger True Value quarters.

1986

Purchase of Bredahl property on North Main Street.

1987

Purchase of Wirth and Rivera property on Water Street

1989

Purchase of Lot #1 (Jail lot) from City.

1990

March 19: Opening of the spacious new Food Centre.

1992

True Value moves into the old grocery department quarters.

2002

Rozier's takes over the operation of the supermarket in Chester. It is renamed The Rozier Country Market.

2001

Oct. 1: New 42,000 square-foot Rozier's Country Mart opens in Ste. Genevieve.

1999

Company purchases the supermarket from the Koetting Family of Ste. Genevieve

1995

Company remodels and adds 8,000 square feet to Food Centre.

1993

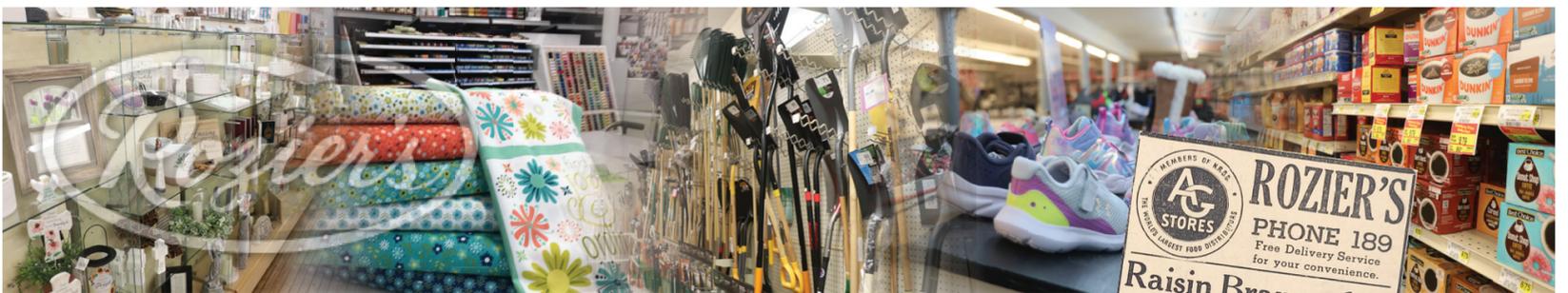
Purchase of 22 acre tract on Highway 51 Bypass from Prost Estate.



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2003

The Hallmark Gold Crown franchise moves into Rozier's department store on Ste. Marie Street. Remodeling/relocation takes place in the men's, shoes and gift departments.

2006

Updated Meat Dept. and Customer Service at Rozier's Food Centre

2010

Installed Meat Dept. service doors at Rozier's Food Centre.

2011

Installed Frozen Dept. service doors at Rozier's Food Centre.

2012

Installed Dairy Dept. service doors at Rozier's Food Centre.

2013

110th Anniversary celebrated.

2014

Updated Produce and Deli Departments at Rozier's Food Centre

2020

Updated exterior of Rozier's true Value with paint and siding, and resurfaced the parking lot of Rozier's Food Centre. Fabric Department started their Sewing Classes.

Lottes said that after he spent some time in the family business, it wasn't long before it felt like home.

"Sometimes you have places that you think you might want to go or do," Lottes said. "After I was there for 10 years, it just felt like the place I wanted to be. Getting the ability to interact with employees and customers and following my grandparents and parents in the business and how they could interact the community and build those relationships it's something I was always interested in."

Some of employees — such as Tim Pingel in the meat department — have spent most of their working lives at Rozier's.

"It's hard to keep the community fed and we do our best," said Pingel, who's been an employee since 1998. "The people are great and it's the reason I have stayed around for so long. It's a nice community."

For some, such as produce manager Dylan Richardet, the family aspect within the company is what has made Rozier's a great place to work.

"It's a great company that has treated me very well," Richardet said. "We have a good crew and employees. The Lotteses are great and flexible when you need time off or something like that. It's a great place to work."

"Times have changed with pricing of items and the people have changed over the years as well," he said. "We are fortunate that we have some people who have worked at Rozier's for 30 or 40 years. That mentality has changed over the years as well. Before people reached that mark more often. To see some of the people who have since retired from Rozier's talk about how great it was to work there is great."

Those changes are more so encompassed by the changes in technology. Rozier's recently added self-checkout registers.

"We used to write everything on paper," Lottes Jr. said. "Now you have everything done mostly by computer and you push a button and all the calculations are done for you. There's been cases that you still need that background in case the power goes out or something like that."

Skip Lottes, 82, another cousin who worked in the hardware department for many years, said those changes weren't always welcome, but having the ability to be flexible has done nothing but benefit the company.

Rozier's has seen and survived many changes over the past 120 years. In addition to selling a variety goods - from groceries to suits and shoes to hardware, hats and handkerchiefs - Rozier's also once served as a place where farmers could sell their products.



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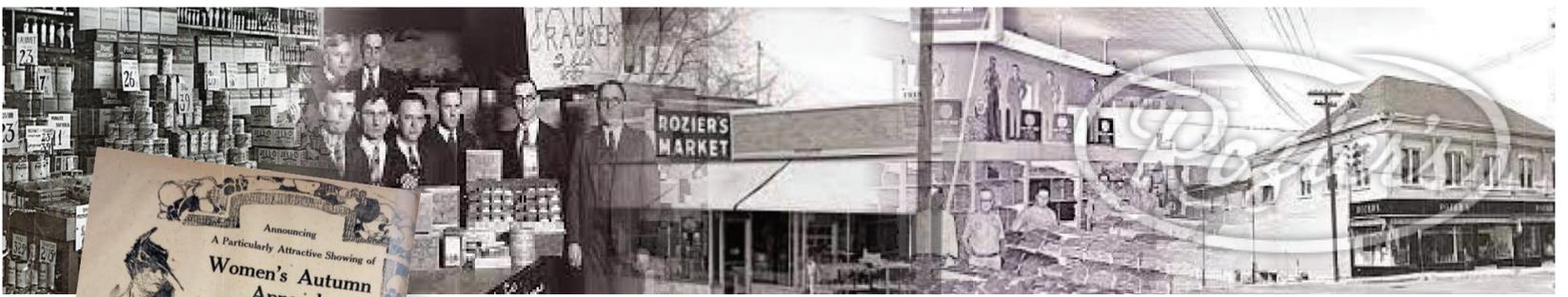
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"To witness the transformation from when my grandfather ran the store to now is tremendous," Skip said. "I did have the ability to see a lot of changes in Rozier's. The change in technology was tough because nobody wanted to change. I remember the scanners and things like that and the public wasn't ready to accept them and today it is just a common thing."

Skip added that the nature of shopping has also changed over the years.

"Everything has changed because customers have the opportunity to spend their money any way they want," Skip said. "We have been able to survive and adapt and that's special because of all the competition that we have today, whether that's the big box stores or even online."

What sets Rozier's apart, according to its employees, is customer service.

"120 years means that Rozier's has staying power," said Rozier's True Value assistant manager Lisa Denton.

What has kept Lottes driven to succeed in Rozier's has been the ability to provide a worthwhile service for Perry County.

"Back in the day in the early 1900 or 1910's, it could take a whole day to get into town," Lottes said. "Back then we always wanted to provide a quality service because people weren't able to come into town that often. Now that can take 10 minutes by car. We still strive to provide that same quality of service now that we did then."

While Jim said "it's an honor" to have been around this long — "Not many family businesses been around that long" — Lottes has his sights firmly set on the future and the generations to come.

"My goal is to hit 150 years and above," he said. "If everyone works hard and keeps an open mind about things that are bound to come up in the future, we should be just fine. You have to be able to work things out whether that be an employee or a customer."

2021

Updated Meat Department's Cutting Room at Rozier's Food Centre

2022

Karen's Hallmark left and remodeling the Roziers Mercantile with wood flooring, moving clothing to the front of the store, Home Decor in the middle and Sewing Dept. to the rear of the store. Layout reversals the old fashion layout. Rozier's Food Centre installed new counters, new check out stations, self checkouts, storage, coolers for meat, dairy and frozen departments.

2023

Rozier's holds it's 120th year Celebration

For 120 years, Rozier's Mercantile has served the citizens of Perryville and Perry County, even expanding to two other locations in two states. Despite that, the downtown Perryville location has always been the heart of the company.

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