

North Branch Liquors' profits go to city

Store works to keep alcohol away from minors

North Branch Liquors opened as a municipal liquor store in North Branch in 1948. The city established the liquor store as a revenue-producing department. Today, the purpose of municipal liquor stores is to “Promote moderation and control in the sale and use of alcohol beverages, while simultaneously generating income for the community.”

The staff at the store, headed by manager Deb Dahlberg, continually works to ensure alcohol and tobacco products do not fall into the hands of minors. One way they do this is to ID all members of a group that are in the store together, regardless of who is actually making the purchase. If all members of the group cannot show proof of being 21 years of age, no one in the group can buy the alcohol. No one under 21 is allowed in the store unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

The store employs 10 people – two full-time managers and eight part-time clerks. Many of the store's staff members are very knowledgeable and capable of assisting customers with their selections for purchase, particularly in the wine department.

Choosing to shop North Branch Liquors directly benefits each member of the community by adding to the profits that go back to its residents. Profits from sales at the store are used to help lower the tax burden for city residents. \$10,000 is budgeted to be used for residential sidewalk installation and replacement projects throughout the city. \$25,000 is used for the bond payment on Williams Park. The balance goes into the city's general fund to fund various city projects and state revenue shortfalls which would otherwise need to be paid for from property taxes.

North Branch Liquors operates out of a 6,000-square-foot building built in 2000 and is located at 5846 Old Main Street, behind the Holiday station. They feature monthly, weekly and daily specials on selected beer, wine and liquor. Included in the store's wide selection are 1,296 wine SKUs, 1,025 spirit SKUs, and 625 beer SKUs. The wine selection includes Minnesota and Wisconsin wines. You can go to the store's website at www.northbranchliquors.com to check out the specials in advance of coming to the store, as well as see when the next tasting event is scheduled. Each month there are also several drink recipes posted.

Twice a year North Branch Liquors' Wine Club hosts large tasting events. Many of the store's vendors come together to offer samples of their products to interested attendees. These tasting events are held in conjunction with the North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce and their fundraising efforts. The tastings are held in various locations throughout the city as available, and feature 12 – 15 vendors tasting out 75-100 different types of wine, liquor and beer. Currently these tastings are held on Thursday evenings, the first one being in the spring (two weeks before Easter), and the second in the fall (two – three weeks before Thanksgiving). Everyone is welcome to attend, and although an invitation is not required, you can stop in at the store and fill out a request card to get on the mailing list to receive advance notice/reminders about upcoming events.

The next tasting is scheduled for Thursday, November 4, 2010 from 5 - 7:30 p.m. Ticket prices are \$15 in advance - \$20 at the door. It will be held in Suite 105 at the North Branch Outlet Mall, 38500 Tanger Drive. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

A recently added segment of North Branch Liquors' Wine Club is informational wine seminars. These are smaller gatherings (maximum of 50 attendees per seminar) currently being held at the AmericInn, where participants learn about a particular topic (i.e. Wine 101 held this past April taught participants about how

wine is made) and gives them an opportunity to taste a small selection of the presenters' wines. Upcoming seminars include "Taste Variations in Varietals" to be held on September 16, 2010, and "Trends in Wine" to be presented on October 21, 2010. The cost to attend these seminars is \$5.00 per person (\$3.00 for paid wine club members) and usually run 1½ to 2 hours in length. Check the website (www.northbranchliquors.com) for more information, or ask a staff member the next time you stop in the store.

North Branch Liquors offers a senior discount of 10 percent off on Tuesdays, and a case discount on wine or liquor of 10 percent everyday. So stop by and say hello to the friendly staff as you pick up some of the "coldest beer in town," check out our recipe section, or try out some of the "Mix-A-Six" singles selections.

Did you know?

Each year, Minnesota's municipal beverage facilities generate approximately \$223 million in sales and contribute approximately \$20 million in net-profits to various city funds in the cities we serve. Thanks for your support.