

ANKENY HARDWARE

One of the metro area's oldest hardware stores, Ankeny Hardware is a Portland institution known as "Portland's Most Crowded Hardware Store". Featuring over 35,000 different items tightly spread-out over 1.3 miles of shelves in a compact 5,000 square foot building, Ankeny Hardware is the place to go for both the usual and the unusual in hardware, plumbing, electrical, hand tools, galvanized metal products, fasteners, paint sundries, builder's hardware, lawn & garden tools, appliance and HVAC parts, and property management supplies. Ankeny also stocks one of the area's largest inventories of winter "inclement weather" goods such as snow shovels, sleds & toboggans, and rock salt & ice melter, along with all the other products customers need to deal with winter's snow, ice, and cold weather.

Summer's hot weather means customers flock into Ankeny for their huge selection of fans and air conditioners...normally over 700 assorted fans and a/c's in stock.

Emergency preparedness products are another one of Ankeny's featured and well-stocked departments. Genuine Aladdin lamps and repair parts, all types of heaters in kerosene and propane styles, Coleman stoves and lamps, lanterns and candles, flashlights and batteries, tarps and rope, water and gasoline storage containers, hardhats and caution tape, gas and water turn off tools, shovels and scoops, face masks and respirators, gloves and hats, and water with a 5-year shelf life are just some of the items Ankeny stocks to help get you through all kinds of emergencies including weather related, earthquake, fire and water damage, and many others.

ANKENY'S EARLY HISTORY

One of Portland's oldest hardware stores, Ankeny Hardware was started a little over 100 years ago at the intersection of SE 28th and SE Ankeny. About 10 years later it moved to the Burnside Trolley Building (next to the Laurelhurst Theater) at 27th and E. Burnside. In the mid 1930's NE 28th and Sandy Blvd became the new location in a building that used to house a post office. It was at this location in 1948 when the father-son team of Morris and Monte Chusid purchased the business. Morris passed away Labor Day weekend in 1957 and Monte decided to purchase his late father's 50% interest in the store and maintain Ankeny Hardware as the neighborhood landmark it had become.

THE "GARBAGE CAN KING" IS CREATED

The 28th & Sandy building was sold in 1960 to Sleep 'N Air Mattress (who already leased half the building) resulting in Ankeny Hardware having just a few months to find a new location. After much searching, Monte eventually found a new location at NE 24th and Sandy...keeping the store in the same neighborhood. As Monte was Ankeny's sole employee, he purchased several dozen 30 gallon garbage cans, filled them with goods from the 28th street location during the business-day and then would transport them to the new 24th street spot in the evening. While this was going on a friend of Monte's, Manual Levenson, designed and built the new shelves and displays. After Monte finally completed his move, he realized that he had dozens of garbage cans left over and had to get rid of them. Monte wheeled the garbage cans out on the sidewalk in front of the store daily and placed a large handwritten sign advertising them for \$1.95. The garbage cans quickly sold. Monte ordered more, eventually expanding Ankeny's garbage can inventory to every available size and style. A newspaper article was written about the large galvanized can inventory calling Monte "Portland's Garbage Can King". 52 years later, Ankeny still continues to feature metal garbage cans in almost all sizes stacked in front of its current SE 11th and Stark Street location.

GROWTH CONTINUES IN THE 1960's THROUGH 1990's

Ankeny continued to grow and expand during the next four decades as Monte made it his mission to stock more and more inventory, always saying "*you can't fix anything with a rain-check*". Most importantly, Monte emphasized as much "Made in USA" merchandise as possible ignoring the cheap imported products that were being sold by others. He was frequently good-naturedly teased about his

sign posted on the front door that read “*Yes, we stock no foreign nails!*” Monte’s son Norman started working at the store as a young child in the early 1960’s and continues there to this day.

Monte was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1996 and given only three months to live. Monte, Norman and Monte’s other son Larry, held a “retirement sale” for several months. Past and current customers lined up in front of the store daily, some from as far away as Los Angeles, to say “Goodbye to Monte” and wish him well. Oregonian newspaper writer Tom Hallman wrote a wonderful two-page story telling about Monte and what was supposed to be his last months of life as he closed the store.

ANKENY HARDWARE MOVES TO ITS CURRENT LOCATION

It was intended for Ankeny Hardware to close after the retirement sale ended in February 1997, but numerous local customers asked Monte and Norman to keep the store open. Responding to these positive requests, Ankeny was moved to SE 11th and Stark Street where Norman already operated Nor-Mon Distributing, a distributor of wholesale appliance and HVAC parts and wholesale hardware. Norman continued Monte’s belief in ‘Made in USA’ products and the slogan “*We Only Stock Products We’d Be Proud to Use Ourselves*” was created.

Inventory and hardware brands stocked were greatly expanded at the new larger location as Monte continued to work a few days each week. Monte eventually lost his battle with pancreatic cancer on January 6, 2002...an amazing six years past the 90 days he was initially given to live.

Today, Ankeny Hardware continues to grow, both in sales and the always increasing amount of high quality “*Made in USA*” products stocked continuing Ankeny’s reputation as “*Portland’s Most Crowded Hardware Store*”.

(Written May 14, 2012)