



Surviving and Thriving: in a small community

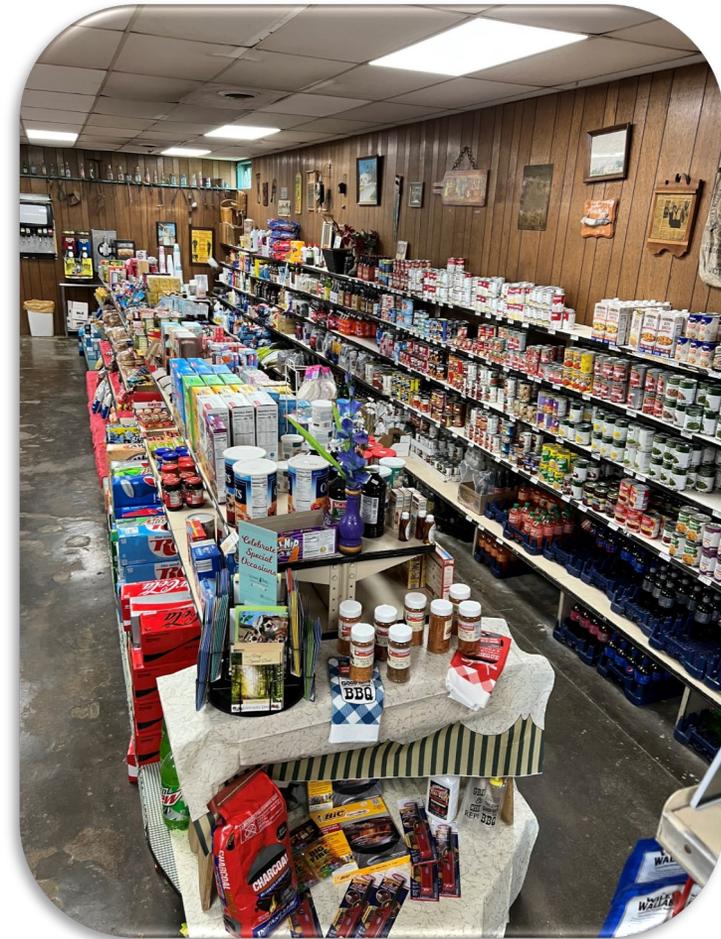
MILDRED STORE

LOREN AND REGENA LANCE

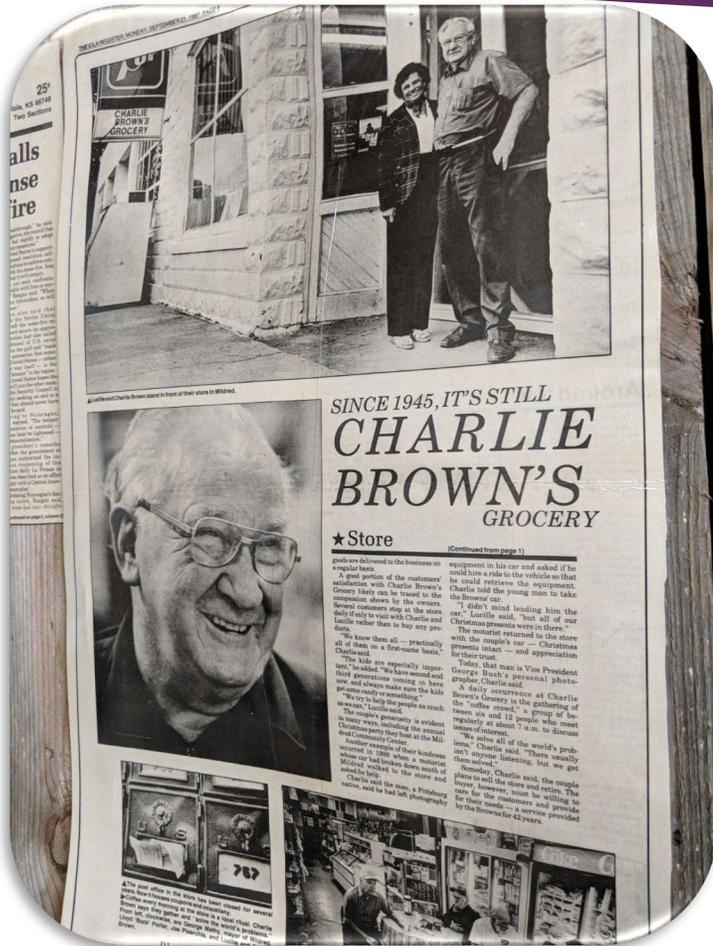
History of the Mildred Store

- ▶ Started 1915
 - ▶ Hardware, garage, feed store
 - ▶ 1945 general merchandise
 - ▶ Community Hub
 - ▶ Booming Town
- ▶ Only one change of ownership (NO EXPERIENCE)
 - ▶ June 2, 2014
 - ▶ Keeping it the same
 - ▶ New ideas

Then and Now



Owners



Known for deli



Current State

- ▶ Town is unincorporated
 - ▶ Population less than 25
 - ▶ Local farming community
- ▶ Working on becoming a Destination
 - ▶ Jon Schallert
 - ▶ Find what makes you unique
 - ▶ Escape your hamster wheel
 - ▶ Think outside of the box
- ▶ Adding amenities to town
 - ▶ RV Park
 - ▶ Storm Shelter
 - ▶ Blocks for kids

Newest additions to the town



Things that draw people in



Improvements/Changes

- ▶ Added ability to take credit cards
- ▶ Created a website
 - ▶ Online sales OOOPS!
 - ▶ Recreating online store
- ▶ Added LED lighting, upgraded coolers, insulated
 - ▶ REAP grant, significant energy savings
- ▶ KHFI- helped pay for additional new coolers
- ▶ Local COVID funds
 - ▶ Addition of walk-in cooler/freezer
 - ▶ Addition of office

Additional Improvements

- ▶ Addition of niche items
 - ▶ Locally made items
 - ▶ Features products from KS, MO, OK and Arkansas
 - ▶ Signature spices
 - ▶ Mildred Store apparel
- ▶ Created a venue space
 - ▶ Class reunions
 - ▶ Wedding receptions
 - ▶ Family gatherings
 - ▶ Host events

Upgrades

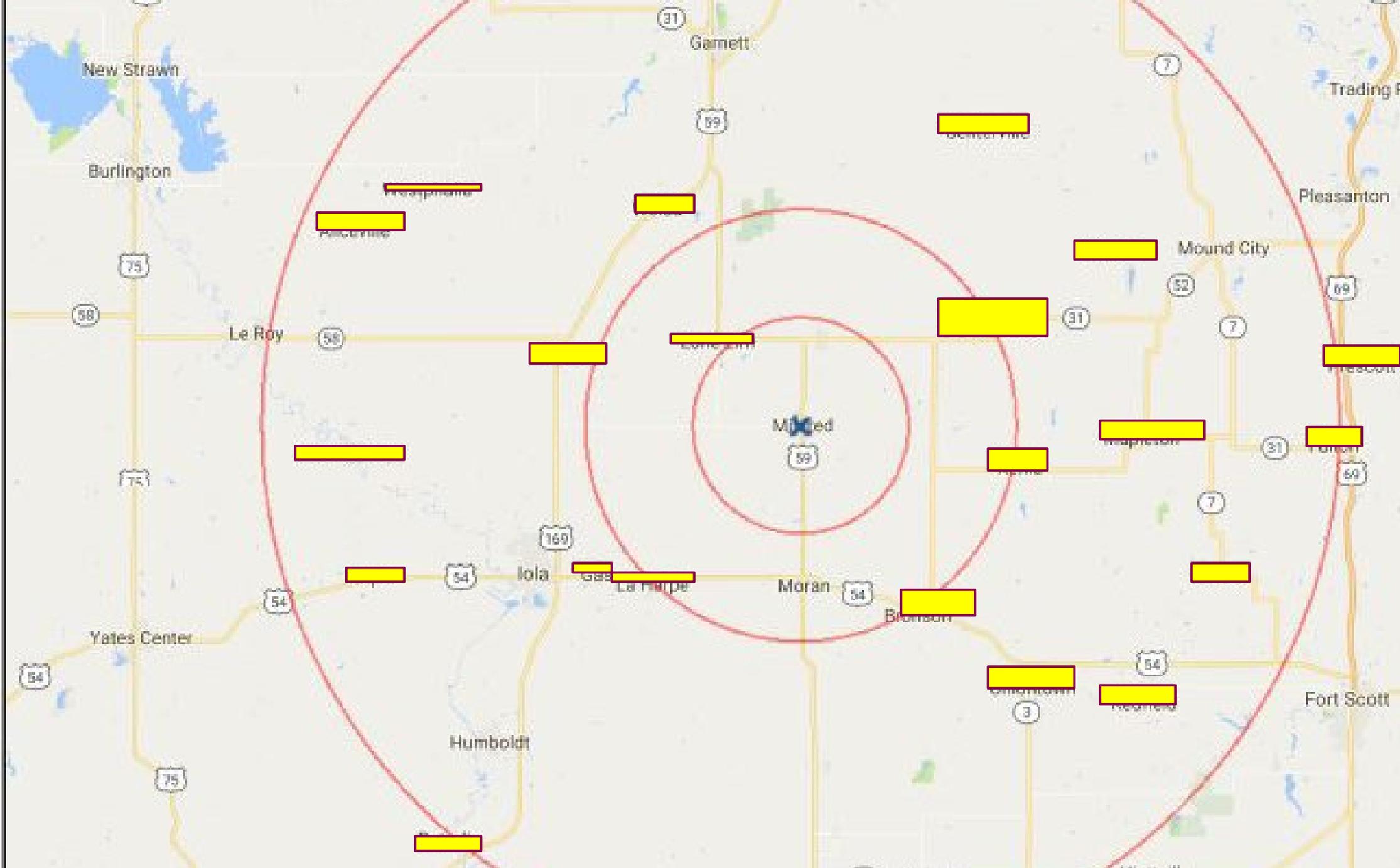


Current Struggles

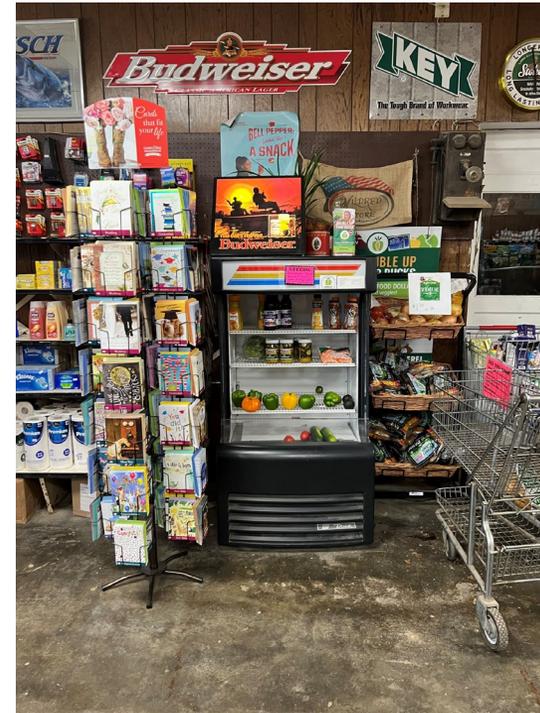
- ▶ Buying Power
 - ▶ Find creative ways to keep prices low
 - ▶ Partnered with other markets
- ▶ Vendors
 - ▶ Raising minimum orders
 - ▶ No longer deliver to our area
 - ▶ Harder to get everything you order
- ▶ Keeping up
 - ▶ Website
 - ▶ Social Media presence
- ▶ Employees
 - ▶ perfect fit
 - ▶ blessed

Additional struggles for local communities

- ▶ Many towns have lost stores
 - ▶ Deliveries/Mobile market
 - ▶ Manpower to complete the task
 - ▶ Still looking at options to serve these communities
 - ▶ Currently make deliveries on Mondays
- ▶ Rising costs of goods and fuel
 - ▶ Families (especially elderly)
 - ▶ One stop shop



Room for improvement



Ideas for future

- ▶ Increase events
 - ▶ Music night
 - ▶ Car show
 - ▶ Fall festival
 - ▶ Christmas bizarre
 - ▶ Spring Fling
 - ▶ Open House (huge hit)
 - ▶ Christmas Pot luck/with Santa
 - ▶ Easter Egg hunt

Community activities



CAR SHOW
Saturday, June 4
4-8 p.m.

Bring out your cars, bikes and rat rods!

Come join us for a relaxing evening of cars and more.

THE MILDRED STORE AND COUNTRY MUSIC VENUE

620-439-5424
After Hours Call: 620-215-2060 • 620-215-2614

86 3RD ST., MILDRED, KS
THEMILDREDSTORE.COM



EASTER EGG HUNT
Sat., April 16 • 2 p.m.
Ages 12 and under

Music will be held at 6:30 p.m. later that evening.
Join us!

THE MILDRED STORE AND COUNTRY MUSIC VENUE

Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. • Sunday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

620-439-5424
After Hours Call: 620-215-2060 • 620-215-2614

86 3RD ST., MILDRED, KANSAS 66755 • THEMILDREDSTORE.COM



Best ideas



REGISTER FOR DOOR PRIZES!

Christmas Open House
THE MILDRED STORE

Sunday, December 12 • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

86 3RD ST., MORAN, KS 66755
620-439-5424
THEMILDREDSTORE.COM

Come taste test some of our specialty items, discover unique gift items and relive the past with our old-fashioned Christmas candy. And check out our venue space as well. It's perfect for holiday family dinners, wedding receptions, birthdays and so much more!

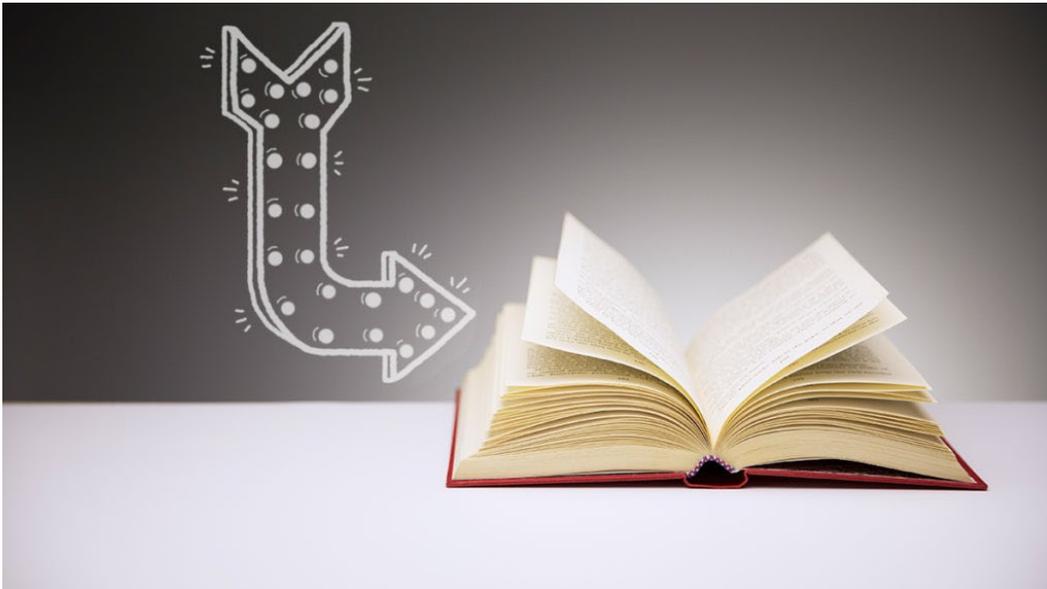
The advertisement features a green background with a string of colorful Christmas lights at the top. At the bottom, there are illustrations of three wrapped Christmas gifts in red and green paper with white bows.



Grocery Store Transition

- ▶ Someday we will be old
 - ▶ Plan for the transition
 - ▶ Take your time
 - ▶ Find the perfect fit
 - ▶ Guidebook
 - ▶ Mentor
 - ▶ Smooth transition

Map of the future



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Highlights

- ▶ Featured in many magazines
- ▶ Received multiple awards
- ▶ Recognized as a Destination Business
- ▶ CBS news documentary on Food Deserts
 - ▶ Over 5 million viewers
 - ▶ About 5 minutes of National TV time
 - ▶ A 30 second ad on this national station costs over \$400,000
 - ▶ All for free



Loren and Regena Lance with the Mildred Store won Thrive's award for recreation for their Music Nights.
Photo by PHOTO COURTESY OF THRIVE ALLEN COUNTY

Conclusion

- ▶ Doesn't happen overnight
- ▶ Hard work/dedication
- ▶ Bumpy road
- ▶ Great rewards
- ▶ Think non-traditionally
- ▶ Dare to dream
- ▶ Utilize your resources
 - ▶ Destination Boot camp Jon Schallert
 - ▶ KHFI-Kansas Healthy Foods Initiative
 - ▶ National Rural Grocery Store Initiative

Read about us

- <https://www.jonschallert.com/destination-business-the-mildred-store-mildred-kansas/>
- https://www.ruralgrocery.org/publications/success-stories/Mildred_Success_Story.pdf
- <https://www.kauffman.org/currents/because-of-three-coolers-mildred-dances-on-saturday-nights/>

Link to article featuring St. Paul Market, Humanity House and Mildred Store

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69oyPdr210A>

Remember this

- ▶ “The beginning of greatness is to be different, and the beginning of failure is to be the same.” –Roy Whittier
- ▶ “If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking.”- George S Patton
- ▶ “Great creators don’t necessarily have the deepest expertise but rather seek out the broadest perspectives.” –Adam Grant

Contact Information

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