

McCullough's Quik Stop



Left to right: Tessa (McCullough) Liska, Tina Therrien and Bea McCullough.

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If Vermont had its own embassy, it might be located in Bethel. And its diplomats — ambassadors spreading the good word about the Green Mountain State — could very easily be the McCullough family.

As the owners and operators of McCullough's Quik Stop, which first opened in 1967 as a gas station and then expanded over the years to include a convenience store, deli and liquor agency, the family is most at home in the heart of its home state.

"Vermont has become a beacon to many out-of-staters due to both its smallness and friendliness," Owner Bea McCullough says. "Many visitors come into the store as strangers, and like our locals, leave as friends."

Much of the credit for that goes to the team, McCullough says. While it may only present a small footprint along Route 107, its influence throughout the community is large, perhaps best exemplified by the 14 employees who help keep the place running — some of whom have been with the store for decades.

"What makes the store special is the fact

we are a mom-and-pop operation and we're thriving," McCullough says. "Our success is due to several factors, including committed employees, loyal customers and our convenient location, just one mile from I-89. We have two longtime loyal employees — Tina Therrien and June Sweenor who have been with our establishment for 29 years each. Our employees' service to our customer base is commendable and makes McCullough's Quik Stop what it is to our community."

The store first opened its doors in Royalton in 1967 — started by James McCullough as a gas station. In 1986, the business was passed to the next generation and the liquor agency was opened. Step inside and visitors are likely to encounter Willo, Cathy and Dan McCullough, Tessa and Tom Liska and Toni Phillip. Heading up the family-owned and operated store is Bea McCullough — semi-retired but still operating the liquor agency store daily. It's something she's done for the past three decades.

"I enjoy the face time with customers and having conversations with those out and about

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in the community," she says of her longtime commitment. "MQS is part of the community. We're a small, hometown convenience store providing excellent customer service to meet our customers' needs."

Visitors from town — and those traveling to and from nearby Killington — stop in for spirits, sandwiches (both fresh-made and a grab-and-go section for customers in a hurry),

hot dogs and coffee. Though at McCullough's you won't find a trendy barista slinging soy frappuchino lattes.

"We are still home to the 50-cent cup of coffee — which customers appreciate," Bea says.

The McCulloughs have been intrigued by the can-do spirit of fellow Vermonters, extending back to past generations who invented better and more efficient farming equipment (Willo and Bea both reside on Echo Lympus farm) up through present day. So as the state's distilling industry began to grow, it was a natural fit for the store.

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"It's extended to the ingenuity of developing new types of spirits, as witnessed by the many breweries now existing in the state," Bea McCullough says. "Of particular importance to us is our Vermont section."

Visitors to the 1,500-square-foot store will encounter locally produced spirits as soon as they walk inside — a conscious decision by the family matriarch.

"We pride ourselves on supporting this section since its beginning," she says. "If you don't see your Vermont brand in our store, let us know and we will order it. These Vermont products have increased in popularity every year and we want to support that."

When she's not managing, ordering for and stocking the liquor agency at McCullough's Quik Stop, Bea McCullough enjoys time with family, which includes a collection of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"Helping and watching the next generation is a gift," she says.

Bea is also president of the Vermont chapter of the Sunshine Society, which reaches out to people who may feel alone or forgotten. But at the end of the day, you're just as likely to find this proud Vermonters making sure the liquor order is complete and the shelves are stocked.

"In the end, a business can only thrive through the support of valued and loyal customers," Bea McCullough says. "We have been truly blessed with such folks. They bring their business, their energy, and many times their ideas that enable us to keep improving." ☘

McCullough's Quik Stop
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