Orangeville-based business marks 100 years in the community

By Brian Lockhart

Being in business for 20 years is quite an accomplishment.

Staying in business for 30 years is rare and means someone has put a lot of hard work into keeping a business viable.

Bryan's Fuel in Orangeville is celebrating an anniversary that places them in a very exclusive club. The company is celebrating 100 years in the community this year.

In 1924, Roy D. Bryan, an Amaranth farmer, purchased a livery stable and blacksmith shop in Orangeville. From this location, Roy started an automotive dealership and garage selling Star & Durant, Essex, and Hudson cars and Rugby trucks. As a smart entrepreneur, he also started selling BA gasoline to keep those vehicles running.

Expanding his operation, Roy's brother Wilson joined the business which grew to include the buying and selling of hay and grain.

Bryan trucks were making regular trips to Toronto. To make the return trip profitable, they started coming back from Toronto with trucks filled with coal ? the predominant home heating method of the time.

A devastating fire on Christmas Day in 1934 destroyed the Bryan's Fuel building as well as the family's home, which was the apartment above the business's garage. Undeterred, Roy and Wilson rebuilt and expanded the operation.

The 1950s saw a big change in the business. After six years as a bomber pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Roy's son Glen returned to Orangeville and joined the family business.

The post-war decade saw a lot of change and with it, prosperity. Glen realized the opportunity was available to expand to include the delivery of home heating oil.

?In 1956, I bought a used oil truck with an 800-gallon tank from Milnes Fuel in Toronto,? Glen said. ?My first customer was Keith Hunter who wanted the tank filled at his new home on Elizabeth Street. The tank truck wasn't ready, so we delivered the oil in pails.?

Over the next few decades, Bryan's Fuel stayed on top of trends in the market with a visionary business model. This included offering service and installation for the units they routinely filled with fuel.

In 1983, the company established itself as a Lennox Dealer, a partnership that exists to this day.

As Glen transitioned to semi-retirement, his sons Greg and Roy took over the business.

During the 1990s, Bryan's Fuel experienced significant growth by expanding its customer base, fleet, and workforce. In 1997, the company relocated to its current location on Richardson Road.

Entering the 2000s, the company again expanded to include propane and propane equipment as well as Geothermal heating.

Expansion included the construction of a propane bulk plant.

In 2007, Greg retired, and Roy carried on the family tradition.

Today, the company is run by Roy, his son Graham, and his daughter Laura.

As a business, Bryan's Fuel has always stayed on top of the trends when it comes to the needs of consumers. This forward-looking approach to business has kept them at the top of their game as they adapt to change in the industry.

Today, the company has 70 employees ? many long-term, including several who have careers at Bryan's Fuel of over 30 years. In addition to delivering fuel, they offer all things home comfort, including furnaces, heat pumps, air conditioning, boilers, water heaters, geothermal, and indoor air quality products.

?Everything home comfort, we provide,? Laura said. ?We spend a lot of time finding great staff and training them to ensure we can continue to install and service equipment. We also invest back into the community. We do that by volunteering and making sure we are supporting local causes. What is important to us is, your business can't last 100 years unless you have a community around you that supports you, and in turn, we do the same. We are very active members of our community. When the community supports you, in turn, you support them back ? and that's how you get people to trust you.?

After 100 years, Bryan's Fuel continues to be a thriving enterprise that is needed in the community and surrounding area.