

Posted: 8:00 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, 2016



Longtime bait-and-tackle company relocates from Hamilton to Fairfield

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FAIRFIELD — A fourth-generation bait-and-tackle company in business for six decades recently moved to a new, larger location.

Wholesale Bait Company/Hamilton Bait & Tackle relocated late last month to 2619 Bobmeyer Road in Fairfield from 1405 Pleasant Ave. in Hamilton, according to co-owner Tony Fessel.

The business could not remain at its longtime former location due to the South Hamilton Crossing Project, which purchased business and residential property via right-of-way acquisitions.

A search of 60 buildings, most of them in Hamilton and the remainder throughout Butler County, yielded a 9,000-square-foot Fairfield facility, one that best met the qualities needed for both retail and wholesale operations, Fessel said.

"Hamilton really wanted us to stay there, we wanted to stay in Hamilton," he said. "There was no desire to leave for any reason, but we wanted to be as close to our target market area, which we established as about a ... 3- to 5-mile radius, but some of our customers come from as far as Dayton, Columbus, Cincinnati and southeast Indiana."

The new facility offers 9,000 square feet of space, more room than its former 7,500-square-foot site.

Fessel and his brother and their father bought the business in 1955, building and expanding it throughout the years but keeping it in the family ever since.

"My son Greg came in as a young boy working with me, riding in trucks and kind of grew up in the business and his son Ben, my grandson, has done the same thing and now he's vice president of the corporation," Fessel said.

The wholesale side of operations delivers by truck to stores within a 150-mile radius and its shipping division ships to stores in the eastern two-thirds of the United States.

The relatively new retail side of the business — Hamilton Bait & Tackle — was established in 2006 for local fisherman looking for live bait and fishing supplies.

Thanks to the new Fairfield location, the business can now provide a larger selection of fishing rods and tackle, including custom-made products.

The new space also finds Wholesale Bait Company/Hamilton Bait & Tackle offering new products, including recreational campers via Cruise America, plus camper and boat storage.

"We're really a big package of a lot of different services and products," Fessel said.

He said the business owes its success to many things, among them the hard work and dedication of numerous full-time employees, some of whom have been employed there more than two or three decades.

That knowledge combines for more than 250 years of experience just with full-time employees alone, not to mention the part-time and seasonal workers required to help meet customers' needs when "fishing fever" strikes, Fessel said.

For more information, call 513-869-2248 or visit www.hamiltonbait.com.

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