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Chad Thomas stands among some of the pet and animal products available at C&D Feed-N-Seed.

Early job leads to new business originally planned for retirement

Sometimes, a first job can leave a lasting impression on a young person.

Such was the case with Chad Thomas, who, many years ago, worked at the former Bird's General Store on Rt. 1. The business sold products to improve one's lawn, as well as pet supplies and sundry other times. "That's kind of how I got into lawn care," said Thomas, owner of C&D Outdoor Improvements.

It's also why he started his latest business venture, C&D Feed-N-Seed, which opened in late February.

Wandering around the store, located at 329 W. Main, one might get a fleeting thought that Thomas would seem like a modern-day Noah, checking off the animals as he orders food. Birds, check. Cats, check. Dogs, check. In

fact, Thomas carries food for a wide range of animals, including fish, rabbits, cows, pigs, horses, chickens, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs and others.

Snakes are missing from the list of critters for which he has food, but that will be remedied. "Not yet, but I'm going to," he said.

The owner of a dog, cats and a rabbit, "I carry what I know and what I feed," Thomas said. Diamond is the featured brand for cat and dog food, but others are also available in wet and dry formulas. Treats of all kinds and flavors are also available.

Farm feed is also in stock, in bags ranging 45 or 50 lbs. Chicken feed is a big seller. "We can't keep up with it,"

See BUSINESS on other side

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Business continued from other side

he said. While Hoopeston doesn't allow chickens, other communities do and come from all around - including Indiana, to buy feed for their flocks.

Along with processed food, C&D Feed-N-Seed also carries ears of corn, shelled corn and bagged oats. Salt blocks are available, too.

The "seed" part of Feed-N-Seed comes in the form grass seed for sun, shade and a combination of the two. Seeds for oat grass - a kitty favorite - and a selection of packaged vegetable and flower seeds - are also in the store.

Thomas would like to expand his brand offerings, at least by a little, but that is easier said than done. He gets his products from a Decatur firm, receiving orders every other Friday. He has learned, however, that many feed companies want to do business only with big box stores, leaving the little guys with fewer options.

He also plans to add other items, such as bird houses and bird feeders, but said he's limited. "I can't add much more unless I add on," he said, grinning.

It was Thomas' original idea to open a feed store when he retired. At 50, though, that's still a way off. He purchased the building in 2012 and bases his lawn care business there but mostly, "it was just two rooms

collecting junk."

This year, he made the decision to sell pet food. He and his father, Terry, redid the interior to look like a rustic feed store. Much of the barn wood used in the project is over 100 years old. He'd like to have a rustic outdoor sign made and perhaps put a couple of chairs at the entry way to make it more old-timey.

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department and police were called to assist in a controlled burn of an unoccupied house at 12:12 p.m. Sunday in the 800 block of North Market.

Both were recalled to the scene at 9:22 p.m. after the fire rekindled.

Weather

Mostly sunny, slight chance of thunderstorms today. High 68. Tonight, cloudy, chance of showers. Low 62. Tomorrow, breezy, showers likely, then severe thunderstorms. High 70, low 41.

For real time Hoopeston weather, visit justthefacts.net/weather/.

The feed store won't add much to his retirement nest egg, Thomas said, adding some items in the store only provide a 30 cent per-item profit. On other items, it's a little better, but his markup is much less than many stores, he said.

Though only open a few months, Thomas has had to contend with supply shortages. One thing he hasn't

had to deal with is a lack of employees. When Thomas is doing his lawn work, his mom, Sandy, runs the feed store for him.

Pleased with sales so far, Thomas said he's filling a need for quality pet food without a drive out of town.

The store is open 2-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 12-5:30 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Saturday.

From the Blotter

Hoopeston police were called at 10:05 a.m. Saturday to the 400 block of East Seminary for a report of criminal damage to property over \$500. The damage is under investigation.

Police investigated an accident at 12:24 p.m. Sunday in the 700 block of South First Ave.

Police said Manuela DeLeon Zamarripa, 68, of Hoopeston, backed a 2005 Dodge van from a parking

space into a 2012 Volkswagen sedan driven by Raeghan Dickison, 16, of Hoopeston.

Zamarripa was ticketed for improper backing. No injuries were reported.

A 70-year-old Hoopeston woman reported at 4:44 p.m. Sunday that a building and sign in the 300 block of East Main had been vandalized. Police are investigating.

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

Silgan Containers is hiring for a General Labor position. Please visit silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/12666 for more information and to apply.

Seeking a club manager for the upcoming season, to manage day to day operations, staff, inventory, some bartending. Call 217-748-6521 or stop by Hubbard Trail clubhouse.

Seeking day and weekend bartender, must have a Basset and food handlers licenses. Call 217-748-6521 or stop by Hubbard Trail clubhouse.

Iroquois County Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for full - and part time correctional officers, responsible for the daily supervision and care of arrestees brought to and/or detained at the Iroquois County Jail. Must be high school graduate or have GED, Iroquois County resident at time of employment (for full time) submit to criminal background check and have basic computer skills. Full time starting salary is \$39,685.65, part time wage is \$15/hr. Applications may be picked up at the Iroquois County Jail/Sheriff's Office, 550 S. Tenth, Watseka or online at iroquoiscountyil.gov/offices/sheriff. Applications/resumes may be mailed to the above address or emailed to cperzee@co.iroquois.il.us. EOE

Silgan Containers, Hoopeston, is hiring for a Production Supervisor/Manager Trainee. To apply or for more information, please visit this link: silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/12540/0

Hoopeston hair salon looking for a cosmetologist, nail tech and esthetician. 765-413-3062

City of Hoopeston Parks Department is seeking applicants for a

seasonal position. Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent. Applications are available at www.cityofhoopeston.com under the Services tab/Employment Opportunities or City Hall, 301 W Main St.

Silgan Containers is hiring for Press Line Mechanics. Please apply online at: silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/12464/0

Silgan Containers is hiring for an Electrician-Industrial/Maintenance position. Please apply online at: silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/12406/0

City of Hoopeston Police Department is taking applications for certified police officers/part time certification is recognized. Applications will be ongoing; no deadline applies for certified officers.

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