



# CENEX® BRANDED STORE CATERERS TO THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY



Having a true sense of community can have a much greater impact in rural America than in other parts of the country. Social interaction with neighbors and access to a multitude of food options are some of the most important factors of what makes a community great. According to Saylor Academy, a quarter of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, but it's often difficult to find gathering spaces that foster a sense of community or a central location to get a variety of food items.

Towns like Harwood, N.D. have residents and businesses that want to constantly make it a better place to live. So, when given the chance to revamp their c-store, Petro Serve USA jumped at the opportunity to make improvements to bring the people of their small town together.

"We love serving our rural community in Harwood but know that our ability to provide necessities was limited," said Kasey Swalef Petro Serve USA Store Manager. "With the remodel, we really wanted to expand the store both in a physical aspect to provide a communal space for residents, and with our product selections."

When it opened its doors in the late 1970s, the Harwood, N.D. based Cenex®-branded Petro Serve USA station started out as a relatively small store with limited offerings. Since its opening, the city of Harwood has transformed, with community members developing new needs that the existing Petro Serve USA couldn't fulfill. Knowing it was time to make a change, Swalef and Petro Serve USA District

***"WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH CENEX AND WHAT ITS LIFT INITIATIVE DOES FOR C-STORES LIKE OURS," SAID SIEWERT. "THROUGH THIS PROGRAM, WE'RE ABLE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS THAT TO CATER SPECIFICALLY TO THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY."***





Manager Angie Siewert decided to take on a full renovation with help from Cenex and its [LIFT initiative](#).

Through the Cenex-branded lighting, image and facilities transformation known as LIFT, Swalef and Siewert were able to partner with Cenex to determine the best upgrades to positively impact Harwood. The LIFT initiative makes it easier for all c-stores in the Cenex family to revitalize both interior and exterior components through low interest financing and the freedom to remodel their store how they see fit.

### Community and Convenience

From basic food selections to a space for community members to gather amongst peers, the Harwood Cenex location is now a place for the community to have their daily coffee chats with friends or an opportunity to develop new relationships with fellow residents.



***“THROUGHOUT OUR REMODEL, WE WERE CONSTANTLY PUTTING OURSELVES IN THE SHOES OF OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS,” SAID SIEWERT. “OF OUR MANY UPGRADES, WE MADE SURE TO IMPLEMENT AN IMPROVED SEATING AREA FOR OUR REGULAR CUSTOMERS WHO OFTEN ENJOY USING OUR STATION TO MEET AND HANG OUT WITH NEIGHBORS.”***





With the closest grocery store being nearly 10 miles away, the Harwood community struggled with finding quality food choices nearby. Knowing that residents had to travel to Fargo to find a store with the adequate options, Petro Serve USA worked to ensure a wide variety of food choices were provided in-store. Options include new coolers with built-in LED lighting, an assortment of refrigerated products, a walk-around deli counter, and the Café USA which offers fresh meals accompanied with its Hot Stuff line of personal-sized pizzas, cheese bread, croissant sandwiches and more.

“With the remodel, a main focus was expanding our food and beverage offerings for our customers,” said Swalef. “We wanted to provide a c-store where people can not only grab coffee, but also get everyday merchandise, preventing customers from being forced to travel to a grocery store outside of town.”



***“BEING ABLE TO TAKE PART IN STRENGTHENING THESE COMMUNITIES IS SUCH AN HONOR,” SAID CHS DIRECTOR OF REFINED FUELS MARKETING, AKHTAR HUSSAIN. “THROUGH THE LIFT INITIATIVE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE WHAT BEING LOCAL TRULY MEANS AND HOW IT’S UNIQUE IN EACH CENEX COMMUNITY.”***







Additional interior upgrades include expanded bathrooms and new showers that were implemented to better accommodate truckers who happen to make a pitstop as they pass through the town.

### **A Welcoming Exterior**

The LIFT initiative isn't limited to interior updates. Exterior upgrades are also available for improved curb appeal. As a part of the Cenex LIFT initiative, all Cenex stores will receive an exterior image refresh called Halo.

The Halo image upgrades include enhancements to the canopy and forecourt, including a new revamped Cenex logo sign, three-dimensional backlit blue arches and a 360-degree LED light band. Through these improvements, the Cenex brand aims to create a safe, well-lit atmosphere, friendly environment and an overall elevated c-store experience.

In addition to the Halo upgrades, exterior updates at Petro Serve USA included 12 new fuel tanks, a car wash and two large freeway signs that can be seen from miles away.

"We've noticed that the renovations, especially the exterior upgrades, have helped make us more favorable to the

community," said Swalef. "We're confident that these updates will increase foot traffic and improve customer preference to our Cenex over other stations in the area."

With Cenex locations being locally owned and operated, fostering community connection is extremely important, and at Petro Serve USA, that standard remains unchanged. Through the partnership between Cenex and Petro Serve USA, Harwood has been provided with the resources, opportunity and camaraderie to sustain the close-knit community that American rural towns need.

Not only are improvements made through the LIFT initiative making communities stronger, but they're also improving sales both in-store and at the pump. Since the implementation of the LIFT initiative, Cenex retailers have seen notable results with some reporting up to a 30% increase in food sales, and a 20% increase in both inside sales and gas sales. ■



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THE CENEX LIFT INITIATIVE,  
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