



CENEX® IS CREATING THE CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITIES



A sense of community means something different to everyone. For many, community is typically viewed through a geographical lens: showing support for and pride in a hometown or showcasing the unique culture or history of a town. But geography is only a small part of how community comes to life in many instances. Community is about so much more than the place — it's also about the people.

Cenex®-branded locations across the country understand the need to foster community, and they're up to the task of ensuring communities thrive in their area. In Wahpeton, N.D., Wade Griffin, retail manager for Southern Valley Travel Center, is motivated by the people who stop at the location each day.

"It's very important to me and to a lot of the employees here to take care of the customers that come in," said Griffin. "We enjoy the day-to-day interactions and conversations. It's a rewarding feeling when someone comes in and you can say, 'Hey, how did your son's ballgame go yesterday?' Through the Cenex LIFT initiative, we've been able to build a space that encourages that type of community feeling."

Griffin and his team were considering remodeling what was the existing Southern Valley Travel Center but determined

that tearing down and building a brand new location was best for the needs of their community. To accomplish this, Griffin and his team partnered with CHS on its new LIFT initiative, a lighting, image and facilities transformation designed to revamp Cenex-branded stores through a series of exterior and interior updates, along with optional no-interest loan funding* for in-store improvements.

A welcoming exterior

In addition to the local community, many people served at Southern Valley Travel Center are travelers and truck drivers. For these folks, curb appeal and ease of access can make all the difference when determining where to stop on their route. One of the upgrades addressing both these needs

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is the all-new Halo forecourt image. The new Halo image includes improvements to the canopy, forecourt and main ID sign, including a 360-degree LED light band, new Cenex® logo signs and three-dimensional backlit blue arches.

“We upgraded the canopy to the new Halo image, and at night especially it really makes this site shine,” said Griffin. “From 2 miles away, you can see it. It’s bright, beautiful and clean, and we’ve noticed when customers pull in, they’re almost in awe.”

Beyond the Halo image, Griffin and his team made additional upgrades to the exterior utilizing resources provided through the LIFT initiative. These upgrades include brick on the exterior, all-new siding and automatic doors.

“Automatic doors aren’t very common at c-stores, and it really helps set us apart from other locations in the area,” said Griffin. “We implemented this feature to help with ease of access to the store, and when customers walk in, they automatically notice what a clean and beautiful facility it is.”

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A comfortable interior

From the moment customers walk into Southern Valley Travel Center, they feel the care and thought that went into making this location a star in the community. Through the LIFT initiative, each Cenex®-branded store team decides what to update, and Griffin and his team focused on the details.

“Immediately when you walk into our facility, you’ll see marble countertops and beautiful custom cabinetry. We did tongue-in-groove in the ceiling and incorporated LED lighting throughout,” said Griffin. “The Cenex LIFT initiative allowed us to make the choices that we felt would make for the most warm and welcoming interior possible.”

Because this project involved a complete rebuild, the team decided to create enough space to include a Caribou Coffee in the store. With room for both a coffee counter and an area to gather, Southern Valley Travel Center quickly became the go-to spot for a group of locals.

“Cenex has been an integral part of many, many communities, much like what we see happen here,” said Griffin. “Every morning there’s a coffee crew that comes by and catches up with each other. They seem to have such a good time, and it’s such a good feeling to walk in and know that you’re part of that.”





LIFT upgrades are making an impact on business

The Cenex® brand developed the LIFT initiative not only with the goal of helping local stores become a community favorite, but also with the intent to help store owners and operators make as big an impact on their bottom line as possible through renovations. Both goals have been met at Southern Valley Travel Center.

“With all the upgrades we included, foot traffic has increased three to four times what it was before we began this project,” said Griffin. “The Cenex LIFT initiative has helped us become the great business we are today.”

The Cenex brand has helped locally owned and operated stores take advantage of over \$75 million in preapproved in-store loans in the first year of the LIFT initiative. There are already nearly 300 additional locations undergoing similar LIFT initiative projects to create improved store experiences for their customers. ■

*In-store loans include a rate of interest equal to five percent (5%) per annum. For qualified applicants, CHS Inc. - Refined Fuels shall make payments of interest on loan directly to lender on borrower's behalf.

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TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CENEX LIFT INITIATIVE, VISIT [CENEX.COM/LIFT](https://www.cenex.com/lift).