

Treasure City giveaway to benefit Lincoln needy

By Jim Wegman

There's a lot of empty space now. Store fixtures are all that remain. They shipped away the remaining clothes to Chicago last Monday and Thursday, an Allied Van Lines truck waited outside to haul away some shelves.

On Jan. 2, Treasure City announced it was closing its two Lincoln stores at 48th and Leighton streets and South 27th Street and Highway 2, leaving about 75 people without jobs.

The stores closed because Treasure City stores in Texas, the other state that has a Treasure City chain, weren't

able to retain leases. Nebraska stores did not have this problem, but Treasure City management decided to terminate its entire operation, Mike Kresha, manager of the 48th and Leighton store, said.

The closure of the chain also forced store department leases like Perry Drug (drug and health department) to close. But it didn't force Perry Drug to give away its merchandise.

Perry Drug, a company based in Pontiac, Mich., decided to give \$45,000 worth of shampoo, soap, toothpaste, knitting yarn, school supplies, toasters, coffee-makers and various other items to the city of Lincoln. John Rusin, district manager of Perry Drug, said the company had a very profitable business in Lincoln and decided it was "time to put something back into the city."

Rusin contacted Mayor Boosalis' office and asked that the items be distributed to low-income people. The mayor's office then asked the Lincoln Action Program to distribute the items.

LAP picked up the items Jan. 27 and has completed distribution to the Indian Center, Lancaster Office of

Mental Retardation, Good Neighbor Center, Friendship House and the Community Emergency Shop.

Linda Northrop, executive director of LAP, and John Taylor, fiscal and personnel director, put together the plan for distributing the items.

Stephanie Bryan, program director for LAP, said the giveaway by Perry Drugs was unique.

"It's the first time I've seen this happen in Lincoln, at least on this scale," she said.

LAP's principal function is to help poor or low-income people of all ages through inside or outside agencies depending on the need, Bryan said.

Perry Drug formerly was known as DeKoven Drug here in Lincoln. Perry bought out the DeKoven stores only two years ago and retained many of the employees. Some have worked there for 15 to 16 years, Rusin said.

Jerry Snyder, manager of the drug and health department (Perry Drug) at the north store, said he is "extremely skeptical of big business, especially when it gives away \$45,000."

He said he was pleased, however, with the way Perry Drug handled it and believed that it was a sincere gesture and not a "close-out sale gimmick."

"It's always been run like a family thing," he said. "I don't want it to sound like a cliché, but it's still the same people shopping here. Business has been good; they (Perry Drug) just wanted to give something back," he said.

Even though he's out of a job, Snyder said he has "absolutely no hard feelings toward Perry Drugs."

He will remain in Lincoln with almost all of the other full-timers, even though he could have negotiated with Perry for a position in another store.

Rusin said he probably would "end up staying with the company," and Kresha said he has interviewed with Richman Goldman and ShopCo, the company that purchased the south Treasure City store.

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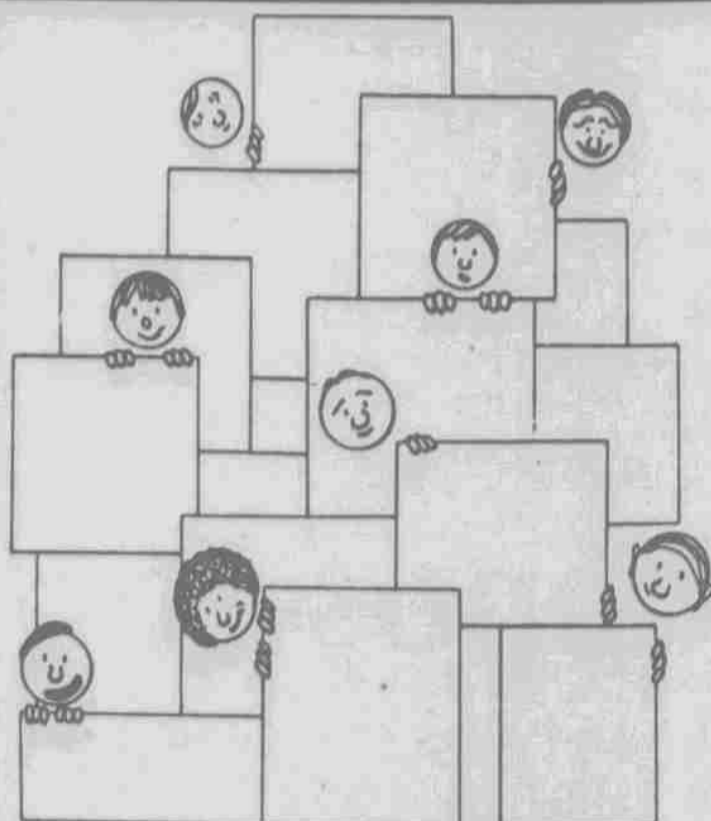
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