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## WISCONSIN DOWNTOWN ACTION COUNCIL DOWNTOWN PROJECT CASE STUDY PROFILE

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**Date:** March 19, 2010

**Project Name:** Tomah Cash Store-Operating a Successful Downtown Department Store

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**Project Location:** Superior Avenue, Tomah, Wisconsin

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**Project Type** (check all that apply)

- Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Adaptive Reuse
  - Redevelopment
  - Signage
  - Creative Partnership
  - Financing
  - Mixed Use
  - Historic Preservation
  - Transportation
  - Open Space
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
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**Project Completion Date/Schedule**

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### **Brief Project Description**

Tomah's Cash and Mercantile Department Store has been in business for 110 years and has been a family owned business since three gentlemen from the Reedsburg area first opened their business in 1900. Tomah was selected as a good business location due to the railroad access for supplies. Originally named the 'Cash and Mercantile Store' due to the owners desire to deal in cash rather than barter or trade for goods and supplies. The original business included groceries. In the 1970's the business remodeled and focused on clothing and in the 1990's the business was purchased by the current owner Mark Rose and his brother.

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**Project Location: Superior Avenue, Tomah, WI**

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**Site Size**

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**Land Uses: Commercial Department Store**

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**Key Words, Special Features: Diversity of Goods-Multi-dimensional Offerings**

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**Project Address: Superior Avenue, Tomah**

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**Owner: Mark Rose**

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**Developer**

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**Architect**

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**Landscape Architect**

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**Other Key Development Members**

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**General Description (Use, Density, Partners, Strategy, Details...)**

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**Site Description (Infill, Adjacencies, Transportation, Age, Opportunities...)**

The Tomah Cash Store sits on a prominent corner in downtown Tomah. The building façade has undergone a number of renovations, with some of the more modern façade coverings being removed to show off the historic details of the structure. The ground floor has attractive glass displays and three pedestrian access points.

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**Development Process (Explain, in detail, the development story)**

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**Planning and Design (Partners, Challenges, Tools Used, Innovation...)**

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**Approvals and Permitting (Agencies, Challenges, Costs, What was learned...)**

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**Financing (Partners, Level of Participation, Equity, Grants, Loans, Revenue...)**

The Cash Store endeavors to keep their pricing competitive by keeping a minimum margin on certain items, knowing people will come back and spend more “If you lose customers once, they may not be back for a long time”.

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**Marketing and Management (Keys to success, Promotion, Target audiences...)**

Mr. Rose indicated that the keys to their business success has been their diverse offerings from suits to work clothes and a variety of shoes, furniture and gifts. This diversity helps the store balance revenue when one sector is down, others fill in. Some goods have been discontinued such as fabrics. Attention has been given to the popular youth clothing and popular name brand clothing as well as the multi-dimensional offerings.

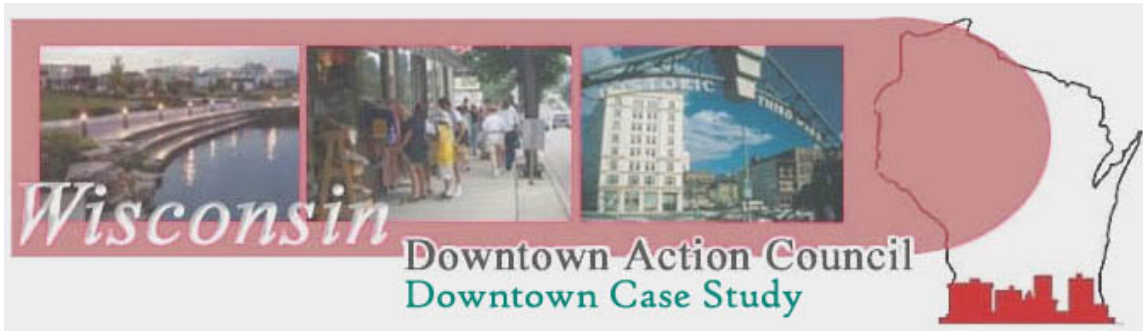
The Cash Store also markets via the website and regularly review competitor websites for tips on improving.

Clerks are also skilled in remembering what repeat customers like so they can assist with gifts, sizes, etc.

The Cash Store also pulls people off Superior Avenue with attractive closeout sales on the sidewalk and participating in local events like the chili-cook off.

The Cash Store has observed that you need to maintain a large selection so people have choices “Carry it big or don’t carry it at all”. They also have a commitment to carrying items that are better quality than local box store offerings.

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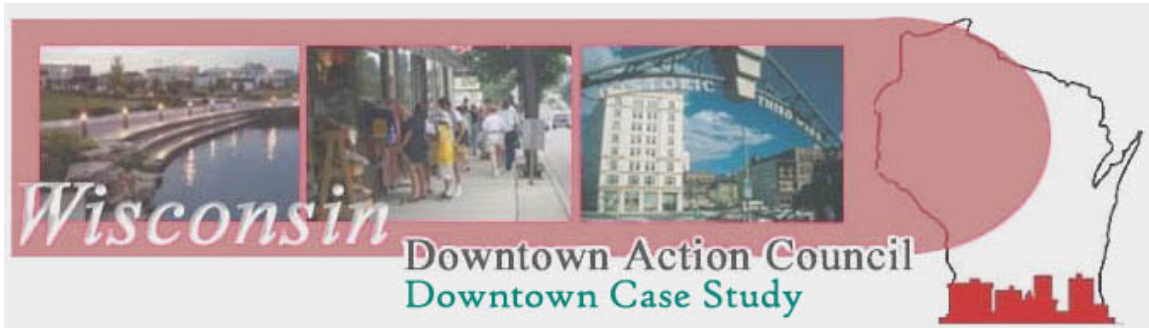


**Experience Gained (Key Issues, Difficulties, Challenges overcome, Solutions..)**

The Tomah Cash Store gives back to the community in donations for youth causes such as uniforms for kids sports and organizations. The owners stay connected to the community by always being there. Mark Rose recalled a story of exceptional customer service when a gentleman came from a distance and stopped by at store closing time. Mark spent an additional 1/2 hour with him and he spent \$200.00 on clothing. The Cash Store also makes sure it hires good employees as they serve as the businesses ambassadors and they still offer special services like gift wrapping that isn't offered in some of the modern day box stores. The Cash Store also takes their products out to the community for events like the annual Cranberry Festival. This helps them attract people back to their store. They also look for special niches, such as selling their log furniture to area campgrounds. The Cash Store also collaborates with other area gift stores in marketing the area as a gift destination. This gives them more bang for their buck in marketing and gets people cross-shopping.

**General Project Data**

|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Land Use Data</b>                 |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Site Area:                           |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Percentage Complete:                 |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Gross Density:                       |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Number of Off Street Parking Spaces: |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| <b>Land Use Plan</b>                 |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Use                                  | Acres                   |                   | Percentage of Site    |                             |
| Buildings                            |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Streets/ Surface Parking             |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Landscaping/Open                     |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Total                                |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| <b>Residential Information</b>       |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Unit Type                            | Number of Units         | Area/ Square Feet | Percentage Leased     | Initial Rental /Sales Price |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| <b>Commercial Information</b>        |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Classification/Type                  | Number of Stores/Spaces |                   | Total Gross Land Area |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
|                                      |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| <b>Development Cost Information</b>  |                         |                   |                       |                             |
| Site Acquisition Cost:               |                         |                   |                       |                             |



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| Site Improvement Costs:<br>Public Infrastructure:<br>Demolition:<br>Relocation:<br>Environmental:<br>Paving:<br>Structures:<br>Total Construction Costs:<br><br>Soft Costs:<br>Architecture and Engineering:<br>Marketing:<br>Taxes/ Insurance:<br>Construction Interest and Fees:<br>Other: |
| <b>Development Schedule</b>  |
| Planning:<br>Site Purchase:<br>Demolition:<br>Construction:<br>Sales/ Leasing/ Occupancy:<br>Project Completion:   |