

Remembering “Fredstrom’s”

What began as a small Surge Dairy Equipment store gradually evolved into what was called in 1956 a modern “Town and Country” store. It was located at 109 South North Avenue in Fairmont, now 77 & 79 Downtown Plaza, and called Fredstrom’s.

Owner and operator Fritz Fredstrom was born in Brainerd, Minnesota, and graduated from high school there. He was married in 1930 and then went to work for Gambles in Brainerd. He was later transferred to the Gamble Store in Boone, Iowa. After becoming assistant manager of the Boone Gambles Store, he accepted a position with Montgomery Ward back in Brainerd. From there, he went to Mankato working at a Surge Distributorship and then to Fairmont.

Fritz Fredstrom originally came to Fairmont in 1942 to manage the Mahowald Hardware Store. Then in 1944 he went into business for himself when offered the Surge Milker dealership for this territory. Being well known in all parts of the county, he quickly made Surge a familiar name on farms in this area. At the outset of his store ownership he wore many hats: he was a salesman; a bookkeeper; and a serviceman for his business. Although this created a rather hectic schedule, he always saved time to be active in his church and civic affairs.

His business expanded with the addition of Kelvinator appliances; consequently in 1953 he purchased the building at 109 South North Avenue which at that time housed the White Feather Hatchery. He expanded the building and it became known as Fredstrom’s Surge-Kelvinator store. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Fredstrom’s Surge-Kelvinator store handled full lines of Kelvinator and Whirlpool home appliances, Surge dairy equipment, Jamesway barn and poultry equipment, and televisions made by General Electric and Stromberg Carlson. In addition, his staff was known for being well trained, courteous and very helpful, and he had established a complete service department. Unfortunately, Fritz Fredstrom passed away in 1962 at the age of 54 ending his business ventures in Martin County.

In looking back in history one can see not only the evolution of society but also the progression and development of those conveniences attributed to making our lives easier. In the 1950s and 1960s Fredstrom’s carried brands such as Kelvinator, Stromberg Carlson, and Surge Bucket Milkers. Although familiar to individuals that remember that era, those brand names and what they helped people accomplish may not necessarily be as readily recognizable today.

For more information on this topic, or to become a member, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.



FREDSTROM'S

Kelvinator
ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Whirlpool
HOME LAUNDRY

FREDSTROM'S

NORT



"Fritz" stands in his Kelvinator range department, during the grand opening held in 1953. More than 5,000 people attended.



Whirlpool

America's Most Popular...
Fastest Selling...

WASHER-DRYER



WASHES

RINSES

DRIES

ALL BY ITSELF!

COMBINATION

**EXCLUSIVE
FILTER-STREAM
ACTION GETS
CLOTHES CLEANER
WITH HALF THE
WATER!**

Clothes are washed in powerful stream of hot filtered suds, then rinsed 3 times! Drying is done with any of 5 separate heats. You **MUST USE IT** to see how economical the RCA WHIRLPOOL does your entire wash!

**SEE A FREE
DEMONSTRATION
TODAY!**

FAIRMONT, MINN.

FREE! TRY THIS AMAZING WASHER-DRYER IN YOUR OWN HOME! No obligation if you decide not to keep it.

The Price? Actually LESS than a separate Washer and Dryer!

Fredstrom's
TOWN & COUNTRY STORE