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Batteries Plus franchise opens doors in Henrietta



ANNETTE LEIN staff photographer

James Growney Jr. works at the diagnostic bench in his newly opened Batteries Plus store in Henrietta. The store is the only one currently operating in New York state. A Syracuse franchise has closed.

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Other than "I want more," what are the three words no one wants to hear on Christmas morning?

Batteries not included.

It's common on Christmas for a holiday gift to be torn happily from its wrapping, spread on the floor for assembling and then left that way for hours or days because the hapless adult forgot to read the battery advisory on the box.

Planning ahead would have helped. But the ability of a missing battery to awaken the Scrooge in people is an indication of

the importance of batteries in modern life.

You can't get the toy to run without them. But neither can you get your laptop to work, your cell phone to function, your camcorder to record, or your car or boat to move.

The future is no less battery-powered. If electric cars become more commonplace than exotic, then battery stores may become a mall staple. Right now, battery retailers bring in \$24 billion a year nationwide. That number could rise significantly if alternative energy grabs hold.

All of this isn't lost on James Growney, who this

week opened the first Batteries Plus store in the Rochester region. Batteries Plus, located in the Tops Plaza on Jefferson Road near Marketview Liquor, sells batteries of all shapes, sizes and purposes.

It's a one-stop shop for an item that consumers ordinarily buy at a variety of places, from the grocery or hardware store to the local automobile repair shop.

The concept centralizes what is now scattered.

And in so doing, it acknowledges the growing importance of the battery in American life, one enhanced in the era of mo-

bile devices.

Growney, whose father, James Growney Sr., was the CEO of the successful Fairport software company C.P.U. Inc. until he sold it, came to the battery business by a roundabout route.

"I was in financial services and executive recruiting until I was laid off when the recession hit," Growney Jr. said. "But even before that, I was looking into franchising possibilities. When I wasn't working, I was doing the usual job-search thing when my dad told me he had seen an

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Batteries

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advertisement from Batteries Plus looking for franchisees.”

Batteries Plus is the nation’s largest battery retailer, with 430 stores in 44 states, with access, in-

cluding cars. says, to 40,000 different types of batteries. The Henrietta store is the only one currently operating in New York; a Syracuse franchise has closed.

“What appealed to me right away was that there was a retail and commercial aspect to this,” Growney Jr. said. “Police departments, fire departments, cities, counties, they have a need for all kinds of batteries and I’m planning to reach out to them. Add that to the retail aspect and the business has a lot of upside.”

Both Grownneys worked on refurbishing the storefront in the plaza. They were able to devote part of the store to a Tech Center, where workers can run tests on batteries, in-

cluding cars.

Growney’s father, who caught a wave of technological change as the head of C.P.U., sees some of the same possibilities for a battery retailer.

“Energy storage is very important at a time when we’re trying to reduce use and become more efficient,” Growney Sr. said. “If the electric car catches on, then the possibilities are that much greater.

“I remember going to the job fair in Florida and seeing all the exhibitors, mostly fast-food companies looking for franchisees, and then seeing this. It stood out right away.”

Batteries seem prosaic. Until you need one. Are you listening, Santa? □

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