

Ribbon cuttings are sign of growth and are always to be celebrated, but three in a week are proof that things in Salem are not slowing down.

On Wednesday, October 11, Schneck celebrated the grand re-opening of the Community Care Clinch, which had been closed since the flash flood on May 19.

Then, on Friday, ribbon cuttings were held in Settlers' Crossing to celebrate the openings of Fantastic Sams and the Verizon store.

"I hope we continue to cut these ribbons," said Salem Mayor Troy Merry after the ribbon cutting at Fantastic Sams. "We celebrate these, but we also remember and support the businesses who are already here. We are here for the ones who are already here and the new ones who are coming. We are going to keep growing!"

Merry said as he gets out and about in the community he hears a lot of positive comments about how things are progressing out State Road 56 near the Walmart.

"People tell me, 'we never dreamed it would look like that out there,'" he said. "We are moving in a positive direction, and we are going to continue to do that!"

The ownership and management at Fantastic Sams couldn't be more pleased with the start they are off to in the Salem community.

Paul Rivard, who owns 13 other salons said that's how they decided to pick last Friday for their grand opening celebration.

“We have 13 salons so Friday the 13th seemed to make sense,” he said.

Rivard said he has operated a salon in Scottsburg for 20 years and it has been successful.

“When we heard Walmart was coming to town, we thought it might be time to come to Salem and take a look at the demographics and decided it was time,” he said.

From the idea stage it has taken two and a half years to get to the point of opening, Rivard said.

Jody Croak, who is the corporate director for the Fantastic Sams group, said the Salem salon opened September 19.

“Things have been wonderful,” Croak said. “We’ve been very welcomed by the community. It’s been a pleasant surprised with how quickly everyone has come in and visited with us and it has been very nice.”

Kendra Gilstrap, who is the Salem salon manager, said the team and staff in place has made her job very easy with getting the salon up and running.

Gilstrap worked for seven years at the Scottsburg location. There are 10 employees working at the Salem salon.

“We’re excited to be here,” she said.

Her emotions were shared by Rivard as he played his trumpet and everyone in attendance

shouted “Charge!” just prior to the ribbon cutting.

Fantastic Sams is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. and from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Saturday and from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Once the dust settled from the celebration at Fantastic Sams, the crowd moved down to the Verizon store, which also had it’s ribbon cutting Friday.

The Verizon store opened September 8th.

Damion Delph is the Regional Director for the Salem location and eight others in a large region.

At this point there are five full-time employees, but Delph admitted if the store remains as busy as it has been, there will be a need to increase the amount of staff.

Verizon is open from 9 a.m. Until 8 p.m. Monday through Friday; from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Verizon didn’t have a trumpet to announce its presences, instead they announced the winners of an on-line contest they had held for local non-profit organizations.

The top three winners were presented with checks.

The top non profit was the Washington County Humane Society, which received \$3,000; the YMCA, which received \$2,000 and the Washington County Community Foundation, which received \$1,000.

Delph said he was very pleased with the on-line turnout.

He said beside outstanding customer service and a large selection of services and products, that's one thing people will notice about the Verizon store and The Cellular Connection, they like to give back to the community.

Each quarter they have a promotion.

Currently they are taking nominations to celebrate our troops. This is called the Veteran's giveback. Anyone can nominate a troop to receive a care kit. The Salem store will be giving away five care kits to local veterans in celebration of Veteran's Day.

In January, there is a similar promotion that begins for teachers and in the second quarter, the promotion turns to senior care centers.

In the third quarter the focus in on a back-to-school backpack giveaway.

"We noticed that Washington County really supports one another and we are excited to be here and involved in a community like this," Deph said.