

Starbucks names Quincy store top performing site in Midwest; community involvement recognized

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Ellen Michaels, manager of the Quincy Starbucks, said hard-working partners, loyal customers and quality coffee have earned the local store the No. 1 performance award in the Midwest. Starbucks opened in Quincy three years ago. (H-W Photo/Michael Kipley)

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Ellen Michaels was pleased, but not all that surprised, to learn that the Starbucks which she manages in Quincy was recognized as the No. 1 performing store in the Midwest this year.

"Honestly, I think the thing that earned this for us is the customer loyalty and customer satisfaction we have," Michaels said.

Starbucks ranks its stores based on coffee sales, profit, turnover, food safety, cleanliness, payroll control, customer satisfaction and other criteria. The Quincy Starbucks won for the Midwestern region as well as winning the community involvement award for

work on local projects such as the Polar Plunge and efforts to benefit the Quincy Humane Society.

Dave Boster, manager of the Quincy Mall, said Starbucks is a great traffic producer for the mall. He's also a regular customer who sees the importance of great customer service.

"You can get a great cup of coffee for a couple of bucks, but I think it's the camaraderie that brings people back as much as the coffee," Boster said. "They know their customers by name. They'll hand me my drink because they see my car pull up in the parking lot or recognize my voice when I'm in the drive-through, and that happens for a lot of people."

Michaels said the local Starbucks has grown at a rapid pace since it opened Nov. 19, 2007. She said it's the only Starbucks within a 100-mile radius and word has gradually gotten out that quality coffee is not as expensive as the rumors suggest.

"We have been educating people about the myth of \$4 coffee," Michaels said.

Although there are specialty drinks that could cost that much or more, Michaels said local clients pay \$2.05 before taxes for a large coffee. The site is busy enough there are times when the 20 indoor seats and 24 outdoor seats are all occupied and the drive-through lane is busy.

"Drive-through is about 60 percent of our business on week days, but on weekends it turns around and we have about 60 percent cafe business," Michaels said.

In addition to rush hours that coincide with work schedules, Michaels and a staff of 18 partners at Starbucks handle late crowds comprised largely of students. Michaels also expects a big crowd this Friday, when stores kick off their after-Thanksgiving sales specials.

"We set a (black Friday) record the year we opened and we've beat it every year. Last year we saw customers come back in two or three times" on that hectic shopping day, Michaels said.

Starbucks Corporation reported its fiscal year financial reports this month. Total revenues rose 17.2 percent to \$2.8 billion for the year. Starbucks chairman, president and CEO Howard Schultz said that growth is "particularly gratifying in light of the formidable economic challenges that our customers" and the company have faced.

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