

Turf/lawn maintenance experts relocate to Medina

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MEDINA — With winter now fully upon us and the Christmas season gone, there aren't a lot of retail businesses that would consider this to be the optimum time to open in a new location. But that might not be the case for the Toro Store.

"Really, from the east side of London, this is pretty handy," commented Branch Manager Ernie Bezaire last week, looking out towards Oxford Road 119 through the window of the turf and lawn maintenance equipment sales and service specialist's brand new location on the southern edge of Medina

Location is one thing, but the benefit of opening a new location of this particular business — the London-area branch of the Toro Store has relocated from its former home on White Oak Road in London — at this time of year is two-fold.

Walking into the retail section of the new location, one reason is obvious: Front and centre in the display of consumer products is the Minnesota-based Toro's line of residential snowblowers. Given recent snowfalls in the region, they've been popular items.

Secondly, the snow has brought to a close the outdoor work season for people like landscape care contractors, municipal parks and sports field managers, and golf course operators. Their attention has now turned to repairing or tuning up equipment that has suffered wear and tear through the summer and fall, or possibly replacing some of that equipment with new trimmers, mowers or chippers.

"We've already had a number of landscape contractors in to see the new location," Bezaire said.

Turf Care Products Canada, which operates three Toro Store locations (the others are in Newmarket, where the company is headquartered, and Montreal) is

the Toro distributor for Ontario and Quebec. They deal only in Toro and Stihl. Toro products can be purchased from other retailers but many of them sell the products in a box, to be assembled by the buyer. The Toro Store sells only fully-assembled pieces of equipment.

Stihl, meanwhile, has a company policy not to sell any of its equipment — including leaf blowers, chainsaws, trimmers and other brush-cutting tools — out of a box. So the Toro Store feels they have a competitive advantage in specializing in fully-assembled products for which they can provide attractive service packages and full warranties.

"Our main business with pretty much any

golf course you can think of all the way from Niagara Falls to Windsor, and from Lake Erie up to Collingwood and Owen Sound," Bezaire said of the newly-opened Medina location, adding the total number of golf course customers for the branch is well in excess of 100.

"Plus, we deal with a lot of cities and municipalities, such as Stratford, St. Marys and London."

The Toro Store is using all the available space in two different buildings in the property on the south edge of Medina that was formerly home to Forman Excavating. The retail and office area is in the building nearest the road, and there's a shop in the other building for repairs

and service.

There's a branch manager at the Medina location, two additional commercial sales reps, one service manager and two mechanics on site, as well as one on-road technician whose home base for parts is now Medina. In the retail and service office, Bezaire and Tammy Beswarick are there to greet customers and handle calls from golf courses and others seeking larger-scale equipment or repairs.

The retail store and office is currently open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. "When we get into the spring and summer, we'll be opening on Saturdays as well," Bezaire said.



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Ernie Bezaire and Tammy Beswarick inside the retail and office space of the newly-relocated London-area branch of The Toro Store. Having moved from its previous home on White Oak Road in London, the Ontario/Quebec distributor for the Toro brand now serves a wide region of southern Ontario out of Medina.