



# THE COMMUNITY PAGE

## BY *Farr* THE BEST!

### Sweetening up Eastern Idahoans Since 1911

As the sun's rays barely peak over the tops of the Big Hole Mountains, at an hour when many people are still fighting a battle to get out from underneath the sheets, a fully-loaded Farr Candy truck rolls past Rigby headed for the Upper Valley. By now, Farr's is as much a part of Eastern Idaho as is the Snake River or Mesa Falls.

The company's story dates all the way back to 1911, when Roy Farr opened a confectionary store in what would become downtown Idaho Falls. In 1911, refrigerators were non-existent, so Roy's store made ice cream and candy on location and sold it directly to customers.

In the mid 1940s, Roy passed on suddenly, and the business fell to his wife. Roy's son-in-law, Bill Call, had just graduated with a degree in dentistry and was on his way to a career fixing teeth when he decided to put his dreams aside and purchase Farr Candy from his mother-in-law. Fifty-eight years later, he'd expanded Roy's confectionary shop into a full-fledged manufacturing business distributing candy and ice cream throughout the region.

"I worked through the summers with him," says Kevin Call, the third generation of Farr Candy company owners. "You could say I was 'born in the freezer,' even though my dad always told me to get into dentistry."

Now, Farr Candy sends trucks out on eight routes to more than 600 customers in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and now Utah. The production facility cranks out almost 1,500 candy bars and more than 2,000 gallons of ice cream each day. Because Farr Candy bars are hand-dipped rather than machine-manufactured, each bar changes hands nine times before it lands on the truck—a truly labor-intensive process that Farr intends to keep.

"It's every 6 year old's dream job," says Brandon Armstrong, who manufactures both ice cream and candy. "It's fun that we still do it by hand, and that we know we won't be replaced by a machine some day."

Kevin says he intends to keep the process at Farr just as hands-on and high quality as ever. "There are other ways that are more efficient," he says. "But you just

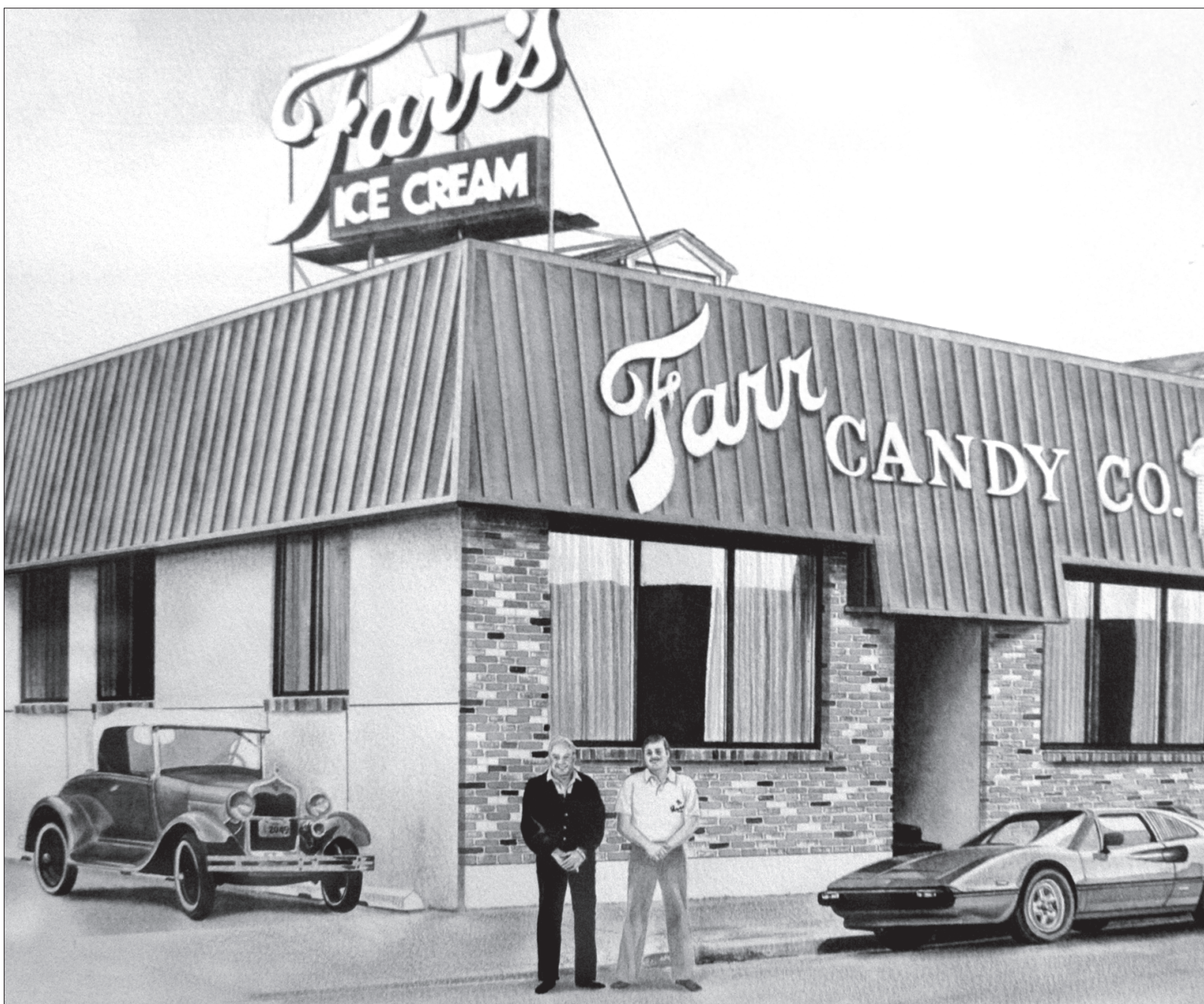


Illustration depicting Kevin Call and his father, Bill, in 1994.

don't get the same taste. We use real vanilla bean for our vanilla where other companies use vanilla flavoring. We also use real Oreo cookies for our Oreo ice cream. It's more expensive, but it makes a difference."

Instead of shortcutting the process, Farr has another resource to keep its quality high—what Kevin calls the "heart" of their business: good people.

"We've had three facilities, and they've all been in downtown Idaho Falls," Kevin says. "Sometimes we think it would be nice to have a big warehouse to work out of, but this community is what we're made of. We've had people who've been with us for years: Bob Whiting,

Dwain Keller, Dee Nish, Jed Stanger, and our secretary, Elsie—just good folks who've been very dedicated to Farr."

And that dedication is continuing with the next generation.



Kevin's son, Bill

"This is more than a business for me," says Bill Call, the fourth generation of 'born-in-the-freezer' family members. "This is where I grew up—it's a home

to me. Knowing that gives me passion for it—it makes you want to make sure it survives."

Businesses like Farr Candy give communities like Idaho Falls their identity; thus, keeping them alive is part of keeping Eastern Idaho alive.

"We used to deliver to a lot of independent grocers like Saving Center, but now we're in most major stores: Wal-Mart, Broulim's, and Albertson's," Kevin says. "There will always be a niche for small businesses that produce high-quality products like we do. People still like local ice cream shops. Every time you support businesses like Broulim's, you support businesses like Farr Candy."

## BETTER THAN HE FOUND US



Kevin Call

How do we account for the long-term success of Farr Candy Company? Even though over 90 percent of the jobs that are created in America come from the small business sector, it is increasingly difficult to find success in the arena. It's a "get large or die" world.

Perhaps the answer lies in the owner of the business, Kevin Call, a man who sees his business as more than simply an end in itself.

Kevin obviously knows his business well, enjoys and gives much to it, but there is a very revealing quality to his contribution that we see reflected in every other part of his life: a deeply felt desire to leave everything he touches better than he found it.

The evidence is all around us.

Take a walk along the greenbelt, enjoy this great contribution to our community, and appreciate that Kevin, serving at one time as President of the sponsoring Rotary Club wasn't content just to have a duck race to earn money. No, what he envisioned was an opportunity to expand the events of the day to include a car and motorcycle show, boat races, craft and food booths, gift drops from helicopters,

and displays of the great military contribution of veterans from our valley.

The Independence Day Parade Committee, which he chaired at the request of many who wanted improvements, was no longer simply organizing the order of entries, but was offering extra events to entertain and engage the waiting crowds with racers and bike stunts, flyovers and shoot-outs.

Even Christmas on his street wasn't complete until he could help organize his neighbors to form Candy Cane Lane, a decorative contribution to the spirit of the season that after many years, still delights visitors.

Kevin's service to his church and family has been exemplary in the extreme with hours, days and years devoted to weekly visits to his congregation, tender care of family members requiring far more than the ordinary amount of devotion, the beauty of his home and yard with a door always open especially to young people in need.

National Night Out events, great as they are, are even better with free ice cream from Farr Candy Company, and you can't attend a meeting with him without a donation of either ice cream

or candy bars. No one sleeps through a meeting with Kevin.

All of this is doubly enjoyable to those of us around him because Kevin himself is so enjoyable to be around, lifting spirits, encouraging participation, and enlisting all around him with his irresistibly attractive personality.

Kevin understands the "extra" mile. It shows in everything he tackles. We, like everything else in the community, are better than he found us because of our association with him.

