

“Sometimes they say, ‘Is that the real price?’” MIKE BRIERE

THE CITY

Costco manager thrilled with response to new store

SANDRA DAVIS
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SAINT JOHN – There are no bigger Costco fans than city residents, says the manager of the big, new store at East Point.

“I’ve been in the business 21 years and we’ve always been popular, but here in Saint John, people like Costco so much that it’s given some wings for us to keep going,” Mike Briere said in his thick Gas-pé accent.

“Everybody’s enjoying it. We’ve been working hard and haven’t had a day off for I don’t know how long. It’s so thrilling for us to see that. It’s really good.”

The response wasn’t surprising, said Briere, who was expecting an enthusiastic reception.

“I could really see what I heard from the last few days – that everybody was so excited about us. It is now real.”

Since the store opened on Thursday, shoppers have been flocking to the 142,000-square-foot box store by the thousands.

The Saint John store is Atlantic Canada’s largest Costco Wholesale.

Shoppers are flabbergasted by the quality, price and size of the products Costco offers, Briere said.

“People are a little bit shocked about that. Sometimes they say, ‘Is that the real price?’” he said.

“We have had only positive comments.” Briere moved to the city in January and has been working ever since to get Costco under way in Saint John.

Since opening, the store’s 220 employees have been working full out, stocking shelves and greeting customers, he said.

On the day the store opened, nearly 5,000 customers made a trip to Costco, followed by a few thousand on the following days.

“The traffic has been phenomenal,” he said.

“It’s exactly what we expected. We have had a lot of comments. They say ‘That’s a great store’. They like the products, and the new products,” like the store’s Triple A meats, which includes a beef tenderloin that has every piece of silver skin and fat removed from it.

Another perk is that, right now, Costco members are being offered \$1,000 off the purchase of a Ford car.

“So the last thing you should say is ‘I’m a Costco member’ and they’re going to cut that by 1,000 bucks.”

Over the past few months, Costco has been trying to bring people in gradu-



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Manager Mike Briere was pleased to see a full parking lot at the new Costco this weekend.

ally to buy their memberships to avoid a rush.

“But in the last few days, we almost at the half-point of what we (had already)

signed on in three days. We’ve had very large traffic,” Briere said.