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Ki-Be Market Owners Honored with WFIA 2017-2018 Community Service Award

Mark and Lori Loften recognized for outstanding civic efforts

BENTON CITY — Mark and Lori Loften know a thing or two about civic pride.

When local residents took to their cars to shop elsewhere, the owners of the Ki-Be Market in Benton City asked them a simple question: “Why drive?”

The statement became a rallying cry for a full-fledged campaign to rejuvenate the city’s downtown and encourage residents to shop closer to home.

And it worked.

The effort — just one of many civic-minded efforts led by the Loftens — has helped strengthen the community fabric, rebuilding civic pride for Benton City. The Loftens worked closely with city officials on a beautification project, pulling weeds on Main Street and working with area businesses to spruce up the downtown. This is one of several reasons the Washington Food Industry Association (WFIA) honored the Loftens with their 2017-2018 Community Service Award. The honor was presented to the Loftens today at their store in Benton City.

“From community tailgates to youth sports sponsorships, tutoring programs and more, Mark and Lori Loften have lifted up the community of Benton City and restored a sense of pride among its residents,” said **Jan Gee, President and CEO of WFIA**. “The Loftens understand

children and families are at the heart of this community. Their enthusiasm and generosity have rejuvenated Benton City, and the stories of their kindness are seemingly endless. Mark and Lori exemplify what it means to be good citizens, and we are so proud to honor them with this well-deserved award.”

The Washington Food Industry Association’s Community Service Award honors individuals in the grocery industry who exemplify the highest standards of service in both business and community to positively influence and enhance the lives of others.

The Loftens have owned Ki-Be Market for 10 years. In that time, the couple have hosted numerous community events in support of local youth sports teams. The store has sponsored weekly promotions highlighting high school football players (complete with lifesize cutouts of the players displayed in store). The Loftens even built a sand volleyball pit and soccer training field at their home for the high school to use, and supplied trainers and coaches to help the teams sharpen their skills.

The Loftens have also extended their generosity to their own employees, purchasing cars for them and helping with auto repairs.

“Mark and Lori have helped create a new positive culture within their community and helped local kids become more well-rounded individuals who learn from their examples on how to become a good citizen,” said **Troy Tanner, a WFIA member and retail operations counselor with Family Foods**. “They feel that if the kids in the school or the community have pride in their town and their school, they will take care of both.”

About the Washington Food Industry Association

The Washington Food Industry Association (WFIA) is dedicated to promoting and protecting the independent, community-focused grocery industry and its suppliers. Founded in 1899, the WFIA represents the state’s independent grocers. Membership includes all levels of the food and beverage distribution industry who collaborate to promote the principles of free enterprise to ensure a vigorous, competitive, economically healthy food industry. The grocery industry provides about 50,000 Washington jobs. For more information, visit www.wa-food-ind.org.