

Dennis Company

Headquarters: Raymond, WA
Company Established: 1905
Employees: 90+
Primary Business: Retail
Hardware/Home Center & Variety

Dennis Company began as Shepard & Dennis Transfer Company in Raymond, Washington in 1905. They began by selling firewood, coal, block ice, brick and lime. Co-Founder, S.L. Dennis became the sole owner in 1919 and purchased the building in Raymond, which they still occupy. Over the years, Dennis Company has grown to include 5 retail locations, with stores in Raymond, Long Beach, Aberdeen, Elma and Montesano, Washington. They employ over 90 full time employees. In addition to hardware, electrical and plumbing, Dennis Company also sells clothing, work wear, sporting goods, house wares, garden supplies, and automotive. They also operate two concrete plants and a television and appliance store.

Dennis Company is in the process of a company-wide IS upgrade including accounting point-of-sale and inventory control. The upgrade required additional bandwidth not previously available in their geographic region. Dennis Company was aware that the local PUD was installing fiber for their internal business needs and proactively approached them to discuss the possibility of connecting to their backbone. Together with their ISP, Reach One Internet, Dennis Company worked with the local PUD to become the first end user of fiber in the area. By underwriting the initial costs to pull the fiber from the utility to the retail core Dennis Company was able to take advantage of this new technology and meet their bandwidth needs. "Small communities have distinct advantages in that lines of communication are pretty clear and accessible without layers of bureaucracy to bog the process down", said Riene Niemczek, controller for Dennis Company. "We were able to get through the formal process very efficiently to make progress, which was in everyone's best interest." In the end this collaborative effort allowed the utility a live test site for the fiber and brings enhanced telecom and bandwidth to the area. "We were very willing to make this investment. It is a win-win situation for the utility, business and consumers alike," remarked Niemczek.

The extra bandwidth and reliability of the fiber connection allows Dennis Company to update and expand their hardware and software infrastructure, and ultimately their retail business. Newer technology requires more advanced telecom and bandwidth. Having it is a critical need for most businesses today. "Our customer's experience will be much more efficient and graceful at point of sale with these enhancements. We will be implementing high-speed credit and debit card processing, paperless reporting, and increased functionality for our employees and customers in all aspects of our business. Without this bandwidth we could not offer these services, says Niemczek. The options with fiber do not stop with just the accounting and point of sale systems, Dennis Company now has the ability to expand needed voice and security systems as well.

Dennis Company takes pride in being proactive in the community it serves. "Taking a leadership role in this effort is in everyone's best interest, noted Niemczek. "It is a necessity for most businesses these days and we hope this service will create opportunity for our geographic area." A growing list of businesses are now interested in taking advantage of the new service and the hope is that potential new business will take notice as well.

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