

Area businessman receives American Legion awards

BY JUSTIN PIEHOWSKI

Sun Focus

The owner of a Fridley grocery store recently received two awards from the Minnesota American Legion for his hiring practices.

Bob Schroer, owner of Bob's Produce Ranch on the corner of Osborne Road and University Avenue, received two plaques from Dick Bennett and Arlo Schweikart of the Fridley American Legion Post 303 last week in the fruit aisle of his store.

One was for consistent hiring of older employees, and the other for the consistent employment of veterans. Schroer was the only person in the state to win these awards.

"This is a great honor," Schroer said. "We hire these people because they are willing to work hard. They never give us any problems when it comes to showing up on time. They are really helping us out more than we are helping them out."

Schroer's name was submitted to the Minnesota American Legion by the local post. All submissions were reviewed by the state and Schroer came up first in both categories.

"We want returning veterans to have the opportunity to earn a good living because we have all given years of our lives



Justin Piehowski/Sun Focus
Bob Schroer, center, with retirees Ray Schmidt, left, and Jack Schreiber, right, at Bob's Produce Ranch in Fridley. Schroer recently received two awards from the Minnesota American Legion for employing veterans and older people.

serving our country willingly and happily. Bob's Produce certainly does that," said Bennett, current commander of the

Fridley Post 303.

Jack Schreiber, who served in the Army for three years during the 1950s,

has worked for Schroer for six years. Schroer called him right after he retired and asked him if he was looking for part-time work. Schroer initially joked that he needed Schreiber to work between 50 and 60 hours a week. But they eventually agreed on about 15. Schreiber works Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

Schreiber said he has tremendous respect for Schroer and his hiring practices, but he said Schroer's greatest asset is his dedication to his customers.

"He is really concerned about keeping the customer satisfied and happy," Schreiber said.

Schroer estimates that currently 12 percent of his employees are veterans, and another 10 percent are retired.

He opened Bob's Produce Ranch in 1959 on East River Road and he moved to his current location in 1969.

Schroer said all employers should strive to hire veterans and older people because of proven track records of hard work, and because retirement can be boring. "I think guys that retire don't want to completely retire, they want things to do. Plus the wives love having them out of the house."