



Travelers within a 150-mile radius of Steamboat Springs can't come into town from any direction without seeing one of the distinctive F.M. Light signs.

F.M. Light & Sons: The First 100 Years

A yearlong celebration marks this Colorado retailer's century in business.

TY AND DEL LOCKHART, owners of F.M. Light & Sons, have history on their side—100 years of history, no less, that has taught them how a solid work ethic and dedication to family and community can pay off.

The store in downtown Steamboat Springs has 5,000 square feet of floor space. Once inside, kids, parents and grandparents discover a large selection of boots, hats, stick-ponies, plastic guns and other Western-themed toys. It's the rare child who leaves the store without something to show for his or her visit.

"Grandma bait" is how Ty Lockhart describes the extensive kid's department.

Lightning, a six-foot-tall fiberglass horse, has been standing in front of the store since 1949. A kid-magnet, it draws an almost steady stream of families traveling with little cowpokes into the store, especially during the busy summers.



A steady stream of would-be buckaroos takes their turn on Lightning, the fiberglass horse, outside the front entrance.

For the past several months, all hands have been turned toward celebrating the store's first 100 years.

Founder Frank M. Light, great-grandfather of Ty and Del, came to Colorado with his wife and seven children in April 1905. Steamboat Springs was a fledgling town and lacked a men's clothing shop. Encouraged by local business leaders and bankers about his prospects, Light purchased a lot on the town's main street and opened the business with his three sons in a modest 25 by 50-foot storefront.

There was no railroad into the town, mail service was uncertain and the population in the area was sparse. Light placed an advertisement in the "Steamboat Pilot" each week. Most customers back then were locals, but the store's ledger also shows that some were European speculators hoping to make their fortune in the West.

In the beginning, merchandise consisted mostly of shoes but soon expanded to men's dress