

## Kiwanis fundraiser keeps on growing

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What started as a door-to-door fundraiser for Kiwanians in Greenville has sprouted into quite a business. And we're not just talking peanuts here. It's also pecans. And pecan logs.

The blue-and-gold Kiwanis International label can be found in convenience and grocery stores throughout southern and eastern North Carolina, and sales this year are projected to reach \$350,000. All the profit — over \$60,000 this year — is directed to [charities supported by the University City Kiwanis Club](#).

"We give all of our profit away," said Les Garner, a longtime Kiwanian who started University City Kiwanis in 1972 and 12 other local clubs. "I think that gives us a good in spot."

Garner's contacts as owner of Garner Wholesale and fellow Kiwanian Ed Daughtry's connections as a sales representative with S.C. Johnson provided some fertile ground to get Kiwanis products on local shelves. The pecan logs and bagged raw peanuts and pecans can be found in all 11 Food Lion stores in Pitt County, 24 Wal-Mart stores east of Interstate 95, 12 Bo's Food Markets in southeastern North Carolina, and in local Trade-Wilco, Kroger, Piggly Wiggly and Harris Teeter stores. Lowe's Food Stores in Greenville and City Market also stock Kiwanis products.

"I was in the wholesale business, and I knew a lot of these Piggly Wiggly people and other stores," Garner said. "Had it not been for Ed, though, we would still be selling to just a few stores, I suppose."

Garner plucked the idea of selling peanuts from a Kiwanis Club he visited in Indiana back in the early 1970s. Initially, peanuts were bagged in Belvoir, and Kiwanis members sold them in the community.

"Every member would be asked to sell a case or two," Garner said. "Then I got a Piggly Wiggly store to put some in."

That grew to multiple stores in Kinston, and "we got started in the wholesale business," Garner said.

Landing Wal-Mart was a big step, Daughtry said.

"We started out with one store here in Greenville as a test store, and it went to six, and then went to 12 and it went to 24," he said.

Pecans and pecan logs were added to the mix about four years ago and have been a big seller — sales of pecan logs last year totaled about 24,000, or 800 cases.

The club has teamed with a supplier in Georgia for its pecans. Kiwanians pitch in to deliver products to stores, a task Garner and Daughtry handled themselves for some years.

"We got that organized last year," Daughtry said. "It took the two of us three weeks to deliver, getting up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and coming in at 9 or 10 at night. It takes us three days (now)."

Garner said the storage area provided by the Salvation Army helps make the project possible.

"We couldn't do this without them," he said. "They've got facilities. They let us store our product there. In fact, they unload it for us.

"We wouldn't have any way to do that if we didn't have this agreement with the Salvation Army."