

# Dairy Express — milk on the moove



Del Patterson/Staff Photo

Reini VanDerHeyd unloads a milk delivery from his Dairy Express truck. He's done this for 17 years.

## ▼ Got milk?

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Reini VanDerHeyd's day begins at 4:15 a.m. He has no time for food — just a cup of coffee — before leaving home at 4:45. "Larsch" is eaten on route.

It's 15 minutes from University Place to Faith Dairy on 72nd and Walder. His day's supply of milk has been bottled during the night and is waiting in crates when he arrives. He loads it into his milk truck and heads back to UP.

VanDerHeyd then delivers to about 80 homes and businesses. He rarely sees any of his residential customers — he just puts their weekly ration into the insulated milk box on their front porch. He never gets bitten by dogs because he always carries protection: chewable bones. Business deliveries he brings inside and loads into the refrigerator.

About five hours later, he's on his way back to Faith Dairy, where he returns the extras he brought along. He then drives home to take a nap and enjoy the rest of the day usually with a game of tennis.

VanDerHeyd has been doing this for 17 years. Five years ago he scheduled himself down from five to four days a week. Sound like VanDerHeyd has a lot of free time? He does. And he enjoys it.

The drawback is that he never gets a vacation. The only day he was absolutely too sick to make his rounds, his wife did it for him.

VanDerHeyd said people tend to think home-delivered milk is a luxury. But it's actually cheaper than buying milk at a grocery store — between 10 and 30 cents less — according to Dairy Express' files.

About 250 homes and businesses in UP and P'crest get their milk delivered by Dairy Express. Residential customers account for about 80 percent of the milk delivered. The aver-

age home gets between two and three gallons a week.

VanDerHeyd said some of his customers want to avoid milk that has the BST hormone that makes cows produce more milk. "Faith Dairy's approach is if they want more milk is to buy more cows," he said.

VanDerHeyd probably sees more children on his rounds than any other age group: some of his biggest customers are day care centers.

"I don't have to run out and get milk every day and it's a lot cheaper this way," said Cindy Joseph, a cook and part-time day-care teacher at the Achievement Center. Her 100 children drink seven half-gallon cartons a day. "Without this guy, I don't know what I'd do."

"Faith Dairy is good milk, and Reini's just a great milkman," said Janeworks owner Sandy Pettingill.

"The milk I deliver today was literally in a cow yesterday," VanDerHeyd said.

VanDerHeyd lived in Erlangen,

Germany, near Nuremberg, until the age of 10. When he graduated from high school in Schaumburg, Ill. in 1969, he tried to stay out of Viet Nam by becoming an air passenger specialist in the Air Force. He succeeded in staying at McCleod for all four years he served.

In 1980 he was laid off by the Louisiana Pacific sawmill and a friend of his was looking into buying a milk route from a man who owned two. VanDerHeyd bought the one in UP and P'crest.

"In my early years I spilled my fair share of milk," he said. The 30-minute round trip back to the dairy was something to cry over, too. The refrigerated milk truck he bought was three years old. It now has 265,000 miles on it and VanDerHeyd adds another 60 daily.

VanDerHeyd said most of his friends have hopped into the truck for a ride along. "Some people think it's a really cool job, but ... it does have it's drawbacks. For one thing, no one comes along in the winter."