

Business Barometer December 2006

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Brisk Business

Fountain and Pond equipment retailer in Phoenix, Ariz.

Business is brisk and doing better than last year. Our sales have more than doubled. We've changed the look and operation of the store and changed the marketing. This has led to higher sales. We've done a lot of direct marketing with flyers and that's helped.

Pumps are our biggest seller, but we offer everything. We're a full-service retailer. We do a lot of contractor business, but we also cater to the average do-it-yourself home owner. Our niche specialty is offering discontinued pond parts and accessories, and that's good for sales and good for our customers.

The weather is always nice here, so things keep moving year-round. We're excited about our growth and about being the master dealer for the state.

According to the Weather
Garden Center in Williston, Vt.

The Christmas season got an early start and went really well. The weather in Vermont has been warmer than usual, leading to better sales. The season has been better than the last couple years, but that's all because of the weather.

Our first quarter season's sales always depend on the weather. If it's a warm year our sales will reflect that. If we have long periods of cold weather, sales will drop off.

We have a new custom redecorating program that has been received well. Of course, right now greens and wreaths are moving well along with Christmas trees and poinsettias--all the holiday items.

Running Constant
Garden and Pond Center in Ellijay, Ga.

The weather makes us a seasonal store. Currently our sales are about the same as last year. There's no growth, but sales are not less than last year. We're usually pretty consistent during this season.

We are located in a high-growth area, but that has brought more competition. Lowe's and Home Depot have opened up stores in the area, and a few new nurseries have opened. Also, more and more people are turning to internet sales, and takes customers away from the store.

Not much moves in January and February, but of course in spring we'll start moving merchandise again. As far as the winter months we'll sell some replacement pumps and maintenance items. We're not cold enough that people need deicers, but it's not warm enough for people to be working much on their gardens and ponds.

Sometimes wholesalers will buy pond equipment, but the average home owners don't do much in the winter. Sometimes right at the end of December we'll sell a few fish.