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Rocky Produce continuing family legacy

By

Keith Loria

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As a third-generation family-owned produce wholesale distributor, Rocky Produce has been an important player in the Michigan produce scene for more than five decades, delivering a full line of quality fruits and vegetables.

That's important at the end of spring and into the summer months, as locally grown produce begins to make its way into retail stores and restaurants, and Rocky Produce is counted on for bringing in Michigan-grown crops, such as asparagus, radishes, kale and greens.

"Right now, this is the busiest time of year," said Dominic Russo, who works sales for the Detroit, MI-based company. "There's a big shift in produce, the weather is nice, everyone is out and about at parties and reasons for people to come out. All that equates to strong sales and strong demand for produce."

A little later in the summer, fruits such as stone fruits, grapes, berries, watermelons, cantaloupes and honeydews will be a major focus.

"We have blueberries coming in now from California and New Jersey, and California stone fruit is just starting," Russo said. "We're waiting on California grapes and all these news seasons are up and coming. When the weather is nice, watermelon and corn are good movers, so we expect to see strong demand with those soon."

Business in 2023 so far has been really strong for the company, even stronger than Russo expected at this point of the year.

"We're grateful for it and we have the right stuff," Russo said. "We've been steady and strong across the board."

The biggest challenges the company faces are driver shortages and the reliability of labor in the warehouse, but the company has faced that before and relies on its experience to get through any issues.

Rocky Produce has earned an excellent reputation as a distributor that delivers its produce across Michigan and throughout the Midwest. That reputation has been earned through expertise, dedication and a lot of hard work.

"We pride ourselves on working very hard," Russo said. "And we do a good job. There's no limit to the challenges that we face—there are unlimited challenges but there are unlimited opportunities to work hard and work together. We have a great team and we've been together for many years. There's a purpose to what we do and how we're doing it."

Russo also credits the great partnerships with growers though the years.

“We have the best growers who over time, trust us, and we have a strong foundation built, which helps us get product when it’s tight, get the sizes that we’re looking for and the varieties we need,” Russo said. “We listen to our customers and their needs and make it all work together. We’re in the middle of it, so there’s a fine line of handling those sales to make everyone happy.”

Being part of a family business like the Russo’s business—and one with the legacy that Rocky Produce has—is something that Russo is proud to be a part of.

“We work so well with each other and know each other really well and there’s always a lot of chatter in the offices throughout the day, and that’s part of the fun of the produce industry,” Russo said.

“We function like a family—the Russo family and the greater Rocky Produce family as well.”

[Keith Loria](#)

About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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