

Borrower Profile: South Royalton Food Coop

When David Brandau, treasurer at South Royalton Food Co-op, needed a loan he called CFNE. David has been an investor with CFNE for over 10 years. "I don't actually remember how long!" He says he has been involved with co-ops for over thirty years because of their commitment to community, equitable treatment of members, and alternative way of doing business which is usually more ecologically sound.

"The loan we received from CFNE was essential to getting our



comment on its transformation from a dark saloon to a bright and spacious community space. Their landlord was generous and patient with them, as many paid and volunteer hours went into blasting

Sales have been strong and are currently on target. According to David, "Expenses have been higher to support that increased level of sales, but well within norms. As with so many not-for-profit co-ops, we remain under capitalized and cash flow can be a problem. We are working

the brick walls, painting sheet rock a cheerful yellow, sanding the old wood floors until they shone, and of course constructing and filling the shelves. Their staff is knowledgeable and friendly and the board is active.

Leslie says, "I have lived in South Royalton for 20 years and have three hungry teens. Before the co-op opened I had to drive a half hour for a head of



store opened and operating. We looked around for other loans but CFNE was the most convenient to apply for with a good interest rate. Besides, since I was the main financial person, I really wanted to use CFNE."

The South Royalton store opened August 29, 2001. Community reaction has been enthusiastic and positive. Their aim has been to be a community grocery store for both local families and students from Vermont Law School.

increase our gross margin to cover expenses and have enough to start a capital fund."

Leslie Staudinger, the co-op Secretary, says "Everyday we see both familiar and new faces. Our membership currently stands at 230 households."

The store itself is beautiful and welcoming. After seven months, even their 'regulars' still



lettuce. I still get goose bumps when I walk in and see fresh organic veggies, locally baked bread, and Equal Exchange coffee."