

1930

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- 1921** Chester A. Coborn, town mayor and known as “Happy Coborn,” opens the first Coborn’s grocery store in the landmark Bell Building in Sauk Rapids. He had previously operated feed, mercantile and grocery stores that he closed.
- 1925** Coborn’s moves to a marquee location on Broadway Avenue in Sauk Rapids and breaks conventions by bringing produce, traditionally established as a separate business at the time, into the grocery store.
- 1929** Chester’s sons, Chester C. “Chet” and Duke, take over after their father dies.
- 1930** Chet and Duke move the grocery store to a larger space across the street. The store extends credit to all customers during the Great Depression and asks them to pay their bills as resources became available.
- 1935** Chet leaves the business and opens a resort on Leech Lake in northern Minnesota.
- 1936** Duke adds a meat market to the store, a first for the region.
- 1939** The store introduces uniforms, olive green shirts with red embroidered lettering.
- 1942** The store completes a major expansion that doubles the store’s size.
- 1952** The store adopts the “cash-and-carry” concept.
- 1957** The company is incorporated after Duke has a heart attack.
- 1959** Duke’s four sons – Bob, Dan, Bill, and Ron – take over the business after their father’s death.
- 1960** The four brothers begin developing growth strategy.
- 1963** The brothers buy Red Owl grocery store in Foley, about 20 miles northeast of the original store in Sauk Rapids. They open a store near St. Cloud State University campus on Fifth Avenue.
- 1967** Dan and Mabel Coborn become charter members of the Central Minnesota Chapter of United Way and begin the company’s legacy as a pacesetter for the community organization.
- 1970** The company’s first liquor store opens next to the Fifth Avenue store in St. Cloud in time for homecoming, connecting the two operations with a common lobby.
- 1972** Coborn’s buys Chet’s Town and Country in Willmar, 65 miles northwest of the company’s St. Cloud roots. It adds 6,000 square feet for an adjoining liquor store and becomes the first grocery store in Minnesota to use scanning at front-end checkouts.
- 1974** Coborn’s opens its fifth store in a space formerly used by Piggly Wiggly in the small strip mall in north St. Cloud. It opens the first free-standing liquor store, not accompanied by a grocery store, near Crossroads Mall in Waite Park. It builds a new Sauk Rapids store down the street from the original store and introduces a scratch bakery, deli and sausage kitchen. Don Wetter, who would later become chief executive officer, joins as controller.
- 1977** Coborn’s opens a supermarket and liquor store in the Eastgate Mall in Little Falls.
- 1979** The company tests a discount warehouse format with a 30,000-square-foot store under the Cash Wise Foods name in Willmar.
- 1981** Coborn’s adds its first video store, located in the new Sartell store. The grocery stores expand store hours and begin going to 24-hour operations over the next five years.
- 1982** The company builds a 50,000-square-foot Cash Wise Foods in Waite Park, opening before any of the big box retailers open in the market. The new liquor store replaces the free-standing liquor store.
- 1983** The company begins construction of a new corporate office in St. Cloud.
- 1984** The company builds a larger Cash Wise Foods store in Willmar and moves previous store to that location and begins plans to expand the Cash Wise Foods brand.
- 1985** Coborn’s expands out of Minnesota with its first store in Mason City, Iowa.
- 1986** The company opens its first convenience store and names it Little Dukes in honor of Dan’s father, Duke.

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- 1986** The first in-store pharmacy opens, located in Cash Wise Foods in Waite Park.
- 1987** The company builds a warehouse for merchandise next to the corporate office. Dan Coborn earns Grocer of the Year from the Minnesota Grocers Association and names Don Wetter president.
- 1988** Cash Wise Foods expands to North Dakota with new store in Fargo.
- 1991** The company opens the Central Bakery production facility.
- 1993** Coborn's introduces the superstore concept.
- 1994** The company adds banking when First American State Bank locates in Sauk Rapids store.
- 1995** The company unveils the first Natural Foods Department, initially in Cash Wise Foods in Waite Park.
- 1996** The company acquires six Holiday stores.
- 1999** Don Wetter becomes first non-family member to serve as chief executive officer of the family-owned business, which includes 23 grocery stores, 15 Little Dukes convenience stores, 14 liquor stores and 18 pharmacies. Dan's son, Chris, becomes president.
- 1999** Cash Wise Foods in Hutchinson becomes a Cub Foods franchise. Customers are not happy with this change and volume drops dramatically. The store changes back to Cash Wise (January 2000).
- 2001** The company adds Save-A-Lot brand to banners, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SUPERVALU Inc. that provides a small-store format focused on carrying a carefully selected assortment of the most popular grocery items. The company installs self-checkout lanes, initially in Albertville. The company also makes a landmark \$3 million gift to CentraCare Health System to move medical and radiation oncology services from St. Cloud Hospital and CentraCare Clinic and to create a customized cancer center in CentraCare Clinic to a customized care environment, named the Coborn Cancer Center. Chris Coborn receives the National Grocers Association's "Spirit of America" award, honoring distinguished individuals for their active involvement and participation in community service and public affairs.
- 2002** Chris Coborn begins Grocers on the Green charity golf event to help children in cancer treatment. The company later adds the Food for the Cure program, where each vendor agrees to donate money to the Coborn Cancer Center for every product sold during an annual two-week period in May.
- 2006** Coborn's, Inc. becomes an ESOP with the adoption of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan, which makes employees co-owners of the company. The company adds a coffee shop, owned and operated by Caribou Coffee, in its Elk River store. The company also adds its first walk-in medical clinic, operated by HealthPartners Central Minnesota Clinics.
- 2007** Chris Coborn is named chief executive officer, becoming the fourth generation to lead the business, which includes 6,000 employees with 33 Coborn's and Cash Wise Foods grocery stores in the Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Iowa, along with pharmacies, convenience, liquor and video stores.
- 2008** CobornsDelivers is created when the company fully launches an online grocery business with the acquisition of SimonDelivers, an online grocer and home-delivery service based in the Twin Cities. Coborn's renames it CobornsDelivers and makes it a new division. Coborn's also opens its first coffee shop, owned and operated by Coborn's, in the Sauk Rapids store.
- 2009** The company enters into an agreement to purchase two Cub Foods stores in St. Cloud and convert them to Cash Wise stores.
- 2012** The company enters a partnership to operate three existing grocery stores and one floral shop in western North Dakota and announces plans to build five new stores in next two years. The company opens its first licensed Save-A-Lot in Minnesota.
- 2013** Coborn's, Inc. hires its first supermarket Registered Dietitian to help customers make healthier, more informed and more nutritious food choices.



2010

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2020

Coborn's, Inc. Timeline - 2014 and Beyond

- 2013** Coborn's acquires four Captain Jack's Liquor stores in Bismarck, North Dakota and continues to operate these locations under the Captain Jack's banner.
- 2014** The company breaks ground for a new corporate office Support Center in St. Cloud, MN. Construction of the 91,000 square foot, three-story complex would provide a work environment conducive to productivity and efficiency.
- 2015** Coborn's acquires four Marketplace Foods stores in Wisconsin, in the communities of Rice Lake, St. Croix Falls, Menomonie and Hayward and would continue to operate these locations under the Marketplace banner.
- 2016** First "next generation" Coborn's store is constructed in Isanti, Minnesota with new-store concepts offering enhanced services and expansion of fresh products. To identify the new fresher offerings, the store is rebranded as Coborn's Marketplace and paved the way for the next several new stores and remodeled stores to distinguish these locations.
- The company launches a new loyalty program called MORE Rewards, incentivizing customer loyalty with promotions, personalized offers and product discounts including fuel, liquor and pharmacy rewards. The completely digital program enables the customer to only need their phone number rather than carrying a membership card – one of the first companies in the country to launch a completely digital program with no physical card. To date, nearly 750,000 guests have enrolled in the program and they have redeemed over \$15million in fuel savings earned from participating
- 2017** Company Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Chris Coborn is inducted into the Minnesota Business Hall of Fame, presented by Twin Cities Business Magazine. Chris represents the fourth generation of Coborn family leadership.
- 2018** First in-store popcorn shop opens at Hornbacher's Gateway West location in Fargo, North Dakota with select Coborn's and Marketplace stores subsequently adding this new feature.
- Dunn Brother's Coffee opens at Coborn's Cooper Avenue store in St. Cloud, Minnesota, the first of this coffee brand to operate in one of our stores.
- 2019** The first "next generation" Cash Wise Foods opens in North Bismarck, North Dakota with an adjoining Cash Wise Liquor store.
- The company revamps its e-commerce website and store support infrastructure to offer curbside pickup in all Coborn's, Cash Wise and Marketplace Foods store locations for guests who shop online.
- Coborn's acquires eight Hornbacher's stores located in the cities of Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota and continues to operate under the Hornbacher's banner.
- 2020** The company responds to a world-wide pandemic called COVID-19 by implementing many new safety protocols in the stores to keep stores open as an essential service for providing access to groceries and other essentials to the public. Plexiglass shields are installed at checkout lanes, ramped up cleaning protocols are implemented, social distancing signage is installed and employees and guests are wearing masks as a way to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus. For a short time, full service bakery, salad bars, deli's and meat departments are all shut down to avoid contact with the virus.
- The first robotic salad maker, "Sally the Salad Robot" is introduced at Otsego's Coborn's Marketplace location, revolutionizing salad bars.
- Coborn's acquires five Andy's Liquor locations in Rochester, Minnesota and operates them independently under the Andy's banner.
- 2021** The company begins administering the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccinations to customers and employees through its pharmacies following a 14 month worldwide pandemic.
- Coborn's, Inc. celebrates its 100th Anniversary with a large four-week promotion called "Deals of the Century" as well as many other store and community events to commemorate the important milestone.
- The company is awarded the Midwest Retailer of the Year by grocery industry trade publication, The Shelby Report.

