

Lucky You

Everything the McCarthy family and Blarney Castle Oil Company does at its 50 Marathon locations is always first-rate, but their summer customer appreciation event deserves some special attention. Customers really love Blarney Castle's annual Lucky You Summer Tour, which will enter its third year traveling to 40-50 EZ Mart locations in the Traverse City and Grand Rapids, Michigan, area.

The promotion has an imaged truck all its own, which contains a full Tiki Bar set up with a thatched roof, tables with colorful umbrellas, seating for both a smoking and non-smoking area, and a white picket fence.



"Customers are treated to a free meal, including Blarney Castle's own brand of hot dogs, chips and soft drinks. Kids also

love the Caribbean Crème slushies," comments Susan Cooper, Northern District territory manager. "Blarney Castle, vendor and EZ Mart personnel are decked out in Island attire, and everyone has a really good time. These events really draw a crowd."

Special signage advertises the upcoming arrival of the Lucky You Summer Tour. Of course, while they're chatting with neighbors or picking up something to eat, customers also have the opportunity to fill out a Marathon credit card application. "Everything is free, and there's no catch," notes Rachelle White, Blarney Castle marketing manager. "We also pump their gas, wash their windows, and thank them for their business. This year, we will also send a takeaway item with them which will offer money saving coupons to bring them back again."

Blarney Castle, family-owned and operated by the McCarthy family, has been a Marathon branded jobber for 30 years and headquarters in Bear Lake, Mich. Three generations are involved in



the business, and Bill McCarthy spearheads the summer credit card promotional tour.



The McCarthy family, owners of Blarney Castle Oil Company, are on hand to personally shake customers' hands. From left: Brian McCarthy, Dennis B. McCarthy, Dennis E. McCarthy, Bill McCarthy, Will McCarthy.

"We're really proud of this promotion and feel it helps put a face to our business," says McCarthy. "People looked really surprised when one of the owners shook their hand, told them they were important to us, and thanked them for their business. We really just wanted to show our customers the respect they deserve and give back a little, and people thrived on it. It's hard to believe, but we had some customers sit down and stay for as long as two hours. In 2008, we reached a total of 18,000 to 20,000 customers at 40 stations over the course of the summer. In 2009, we will travel to 54 locations and hope to reach 30,000 customers."

"Blarney Castle is a great Marathon jobber, and their customers absolutely love this event," concludes Cooper. "The Lucky You Summer Tour is a first class example of how Blarney Castle believes in treating their customers."

