



David Briggs in the family sugar bush at Collier Mountain, N.B. (left), and at work making value-added maple products. The syrup processing facility is being relocated from Riverview to Briggs' home property in Hillsborough, which will house retail space for maple products as well as a warehouse for sales of maple industry equipment. (Briggs Maples photos)

One-stop syrup shop

Briggs Maples offers production equipment as well as sweet comestibles

by **George Fullerton**

David Briggs and his father Lea operate a 12,000-tap sugar bush operation at Collier Mountain, south of Elgin, N.B., continuing a family tradition that stretches back five generations. This year, in addition to contending with all the complications brought by pandemic-related restrictions, Briggs Maples is relocating its value-added processing and retail location.

Until recently, Briggs Maples was an anchor tenant at Chocolate River Station, a business cluster in the former fire station on the banks of the Petitcodiac River in Riverview, N.B. The company leased about 1,800 square feet – split between a commercial

kitchen for bottling and processing syrup, and a store that was popular with tourists and locals who came to buy a variety of maple products made on site.

However, the property has been sold, and the new owners plan to erect residential towers there, so David Briggs is moving his operation down the road. He has added an annex to the maple equipment warehouse adjacent to his home in Hillsborough, with ample space for bottling syrup and producing treats such as maple cream and maple butter, taffy, maple sugar, candies, and jams and jellies. These products will be sold on site, and also packaged for shipping to retailers.

“We plan to streamline our production

a bit, but we expect to eventually grow to employ a half dozen people,” says Briggs. “We are optimistic that our location on Main Street in Hillsborough will not only attract our customer base from Chocolate River Station, but also capture additional business from tourist traffic on Route 114 headed to Hopewell Rocks and Fundy National Park.”

The company also serves the maple industry, stocking syrup containers manufactured by Richards Packaging, and a full range of sugar-bush production equipment—“from spiles and buckets, through to tubing, any size evaporator, and reverse osmosis systems,” Briggs says.

About six years ago, he took over his uncle’s role as a dealer for Lapierre maple equipment, and this remains a key part of the business. “If we don’t have it on hand, we have fast delivery of products from Lapierre’s warehouses in Saint-Ludger and Waterloo, Quebec,” says Briggs.

“We can also provide producers with remote data and system management technologies. The technology development for maple production continually advances, and we can provide that technology and help producers install it. Lapierre provides excellent technical support to help producers achieve maximum benefit with the technologies.”

