



# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: January 25, 2021

## CENTER HARDWARE & SUPPLY CO., INC.

*Application No.:* LBR-2020-21-022  
*Business Name:* Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.  
*Business Address:* 3003 3rd Street  
*District:* District 10  
*Applicant:* Jamie Gentner, Chief Operating Officer  
*Nomination Letter Date:* December 7, 2020  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London Breed  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. is a retail hardware store founded by Heinz Solbach in September 1946. The business has roots dating back to two hardware stores, P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass and Ocean View Hardware, both founded in San Francisco in the late 1880s. The two stores eventually merged to become what is known today as Center Hardware.

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. opened under that name in 1946 at 638 4th Street, where it remained until 1988, moving to a much larger location at 999 Mariposa Street, to accommodate a rapidly growing hardware inventory. Center Hardware remained in its second location until 1988, when it lost its lease. Rather than closing, Center Hardware moved to its current location in Dogpatch at 3003 3rd Street in 2017, maintaining its distinctive red-brick-colored look, with cream and black lettering and a black circular logo. Located in a classic industrial warehouse building, its current location provides enough space to stock an expansive inventory, as well as ample room for store stocking and loading. Center Hardware is one of the largest independent hardware stores in the city, boasting an inventory of 100,000 different items from a diverse array of hardware brands. Its Dogpatch location also accommodates customer parking, delivery, drop-off, and curbside hardware services. Further, honoring its long history as a hardware store, Center Hardware also maintains a curated collection of antique tools and machines, which is displayed in the store. Center Hardware has been continuously family-owned and operated by the Gentner Family since 1980.

Center Hardware's customers vary from residents, artists, trade professionals, homeowners, businesses, contractors, building engineers, construction companies, property managers, and even City departments, carrying out projects that range from small home-repair projects to large scale infrastructure and high rises. The business gives back to the community it serves, particularly the eastern neighborhoods of San Francisco. Center Hardware has engaged local artists and tradespeople in commissioning a community mural; donates materials and tools to local high school students, including holding an annual fundraiser to support trades education at John O'Connell High School; donates space for local makers to sell their products; and has even hosted Toolapalooza, an event celebrating the trades. Center Hardware Inc. also sells Clipper Cards and SFMTA parking cards. For its lasting service and contribution to San Francisco, Center Hardware was given a Certificate of Honor from the Board of Supervisors in 2017. Center Hardware, including its historic two predecessors, has also been an emergency hardware and industrial supplier through both the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989, and two pandemics. Center Hardware was formally recognized in 2006 for its emergency efforts by the California State Assembly, City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Treasurer, and the Small Business Commission as part of San Francisco Rising, a citywide commemoration of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906.

### Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)





## CRITERION 1

**Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

638 4th Street from 1946 to 1988 (42 years)  
999 Mariposa Street from 1988 to 2017 (29 years)  
3003 3rd Street from 2017 to Present (3 years)

## CRITERION 2

**Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has contributed to the history and identity of the SoMa and Dogpatch neighborhoods and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., as it's known today, was born from the merger of two longtime San Francisco hardware stores in the 1980s. The first, P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass, was originally founded in the late 1880s. The second, Ocean View Hardware, was founded in the 1890s. Both older hardware stores were destroyed at their original downtown locations by the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and were subsequently rebuilt at different locations within San Francisco.
- The businesses' primary location, a warehouse located at 3003 3rd Street is in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure. 3003 3rd Street was included in the Central Waterfront Historic Survey (2001), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "7N1" (needs to be reevaluated – may become eligible for National Register with restoration or when meets other specific conditions).
- There have been a number of local features and articles on Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., both within and outside the industry. Outside of the industry, Center Hardware been covered in local media in articles from KTVU Fox 2, Hoodline, 7x7, and The San Francisco Business Times. Inside of the industry, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has been featured in industry magazines such as The Hardware Connection, Hardware Retailing, and Hardware Building and Supply Dealer. Center Hardware has also been featured in articles from hardware industry groups such as SFMade, Building Owners and Managers Association of San Francisco, and the California Hardware Retail Association.

## CRITERION 3

**Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

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#### Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Hardware store.
- Store building painted with a brick-red-colored body, painted cream lettering, circular black logo.
- Curated display collection of antique tools and machines.
- Diversity of hardware and tool brands and stock.
- Wide range of hardware customer services (recycling drop-off location for latex paint, batteries, and fluorescent bulbs, bin maintenance, delivery, curbside pickup, tool repair, online and paper product catalog, tool replacement program)
- Sale of SFMTA parking cards, Clipper Cards, and California fishing and hunting licenses.
- Engagement with San Francisco trades community and support of trades education at John O'Connell High School.

#### **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Hardware store.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. currently located at 3003 3rd Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager  
Legacy Business Program

#### **Legacy Business Program**

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# Small Business Commission

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

January 25, 2021

## CENTER HARDWARE & SUPPLY CO., INC.

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*Nomination Letter Date:* December 7, 2020  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London Breed  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### **Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., currently located at 3003 3rd Street.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 25, 2021, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

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- Diversity of hardware and tool brands and stock.
- Wide range of hardware customer services (recycling drop-off location for latex paint, batteries, and fluorescent bulbs, bin maintenance, delivery, curbside pickup, tool repair, online and paper product catalog, tool replacement program)
- Sale of SFMTA parking cards, Clipper Cards, and California fishing and hunting licenses.
- Engagement with San Francisco trades community and support of trades education at John O'Connell High School.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Hardware store.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on January 25, 2021.

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Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes –  
Nays –  
Abstained –  
Absent –

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# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2020-21-022  
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*Applicant:* Jamie Gentner, Chief Operating Officer  
*Nomination Letter Date:* December 7, 2020  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London Breed

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes  No

638 4th Street from 1946 to 1988 (42 years)  
999 Mariposa Street from 1988 to 2017 (29 years)  
3003 3rd Street from 2017 to Present (3 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes  No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** December 9, 2020

Richard Kurylo  
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

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December 7, 2020

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
San Francisco Office of Small Business  
City Hall, Room 110  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi,

I am writing to nominate Center Hardware for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

The purpose of the City's Legacy Business Registry is to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City. Per ordinance, a business must be nominated by the Mayor or a member of the Board of Supervisors to be reviewed, processed and approved by the Small Business Commission as a Legacy Business at a public hearing if it meets the criteria set forth.

Since its grand opening in 1946, Center Hardware has provided high-quality tools, industrial supplies, and service to professionals, homeowners, and makers throughout the Bay Area. Though Center Hardware was officially established in 1946, its roots date back to the 1880s, through two major earthquakes and two global pandemics. Center Hardware and its predecessor businesses have provided the tools to help San Franciscans build and rebuild their neighborhoods for over a century.

Additionally, Center Hardware has an active presence in the community, and has supported local artists in establishing a community mural, donated materials for local high school students, hosted weekend open-air markets for local makers, hosted Toolapalooza – a one-of-a kind celebration of the trades annually – and hosted a yearly fundraiser that has raised thousands of dollars to support building and construction trades education in John O'Connell High School. Center Hardware has contributed to the history and identity of our City and fostered civic engagement and pride.

It is an honor to recognize the legacy and contributions of Center Hardware to our great City of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "London Breed".

London N. Breed  
Mayor

## Section One:

### Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>	
Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.	
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S)</b> (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Ernest Keith Gentner	
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>
3003 Third Street San Francisco, CA 94107	(415) 861-1800
	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
	sales@centerhardware.com
<b>MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:</b>	<b>MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	
	<b>MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:</b>
<b>WEBSITE ADDRESS:</b>	
<a href="https://www.centerhardware.com/">https://www.centerhardware.com/</a>	
<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/centerhardware/">https://www.facebook.com/centerhardware/</a>	
<b>TWITTER NAME:</b>	
@centerhardware	
<b>APPLICANT'S NAME:</b>	<b>APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>
Jamie Gentner	
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE:</b>	<b>APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>
Chief Operating Officer	
<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	
0005189	
<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):</b>	
C0537667	



## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
638 4th Street	94107	1946
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1946 to 1988	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
999 Mariposa Street	94107	Start: 1988
		End: 2017

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
3003 3rd Street	94107	Start: 2017
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.


#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.  I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Jamie M. Gentner      Dec. 9, 2020  
Name (Print): Date: Signature: 

## **CENTER HARDWARE**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. (“Center Hardware”), located at 3003 3rd Street in the Dogpatch neighborhood, was established in 1946. Its roots, however, date back to the 1880s with origins stemming from two San Francisco hardware stores: P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass and Ocean View Hardware.

P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass was founded in the 1880s by Peter A. Smith who came to San Francisco in 1853 when he was just 20 years old. The store was located at 612 ½ Fourth Street at the corner of 4th and Brannan streets. At the time, the business primarily supplied products to the burgeoning ship repair business in San Francisco. When the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire destroyed the store, Peter rebuilt the store at 638 4th Street. In 1946, Peter sold the store to Heinz Solbach, and he renamed it Center Hardware. In 1968, Center Hardware was purchased by Richard Blanz who eventually took in partners Irwin Blanz and David Newsom.

Ocean View Hardware was founded in the late 1890s by Ernest Leinhardt after he and his half-brother Ernest Gentner immigrated from Germany to San Francisco. The original store was on Market Street, the name lost in 1906 with the fire that burned down the original location. In 1907, using insurance money, the family was able to rebuild the store, opening Ocean View Hardware at 2 Sadowa Street at San Jose Avenue. Gentner’s son, Ernest Frederick, came back to work with his uncle full time in 1947 after World War II. Eventually Ernest F. took over the store from his uncle. Ernest F.’s son Keith Gentner grew up working at his side and eventually took over Ocean View Hardware entirely.

In 1980, Richard Blanz sold his portion of Center Hardware to Keith Gentner. By this agreement, Gentner allowed Center Hardware to absorb and formally close Ocean View Hardware. In 1982, Keith bought out partners Irwin Blanz and David Newsom. Within a few years, business at Center Hardware was booming. Keith expanded business services and inventory to the point that the little store on 4th Street was bursting at the seams. In 1988, Center Hardware moved into a 20,000-square-foot building that had been previously used for steel manufacturing at 999 Mariposa Street in the Potrero Hill neighborhood. In 1995, Keith took on a new partner, Steve Leary and their partnership lasted until 2013 when Steve retired. In January 2017, after losing its lease on Mariposa Street, Center Hardware expanded and relocated again to 3003 3rd Street

in the Dogpatch neighborhood, its current location, where they keep 100,000 items in stock every day.

Keith's daughter, Jamie, joined the business full-time in 1998. The father-daughter team is committed to continuing Center Hardware's long-standing mission to serve the Bay Area by providing both a tremendous on-site inventory and concierge-level customer service.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

Center Hardware has not ceased operations in San Francisco since it was established in 1946.

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

Center Hardware is a family-owned business. Father-daughter team Keith Gentner and Jamie Gentner own and operate the business.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

The ownership history of Center Hardware is as follows:

1946 to 1968:	Heinz Solbach
1968 to Unknown:	Richard Blanz
Unknown to 1980:	Richard Blanz, Irwin Blanz, and David Newsom
1980 to 1982:	Keith Gentner, Irwin Blanz, and David Newsom
1982 to 1995:	Keith Gentner
1995 to 2013:	Keith Gentner, Steve Leary
2013 to Present:	Keith Gentner

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Keith Gentner has owned Center Hardware since 1980. Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The historic resource status of the building that houses Center Hardware is classified by the Planning Department as Category B, Unknown / Age Eligible, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

## **CRITERION 2**

### **a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

Center Hardware has built itself behind the scenes of San Francisco. The store has supplied the city, its businesses, events, residents, artists, and jobsites with the necessary materials to keep things running. They have established relationships with building engineers, construction companies, property managers, and City departments who rely on Center Hardware to maintain the inventory materials they need to keep San Francisco running. Building engineers have Center Hardware's cell phone numbers for emergencies and 24-hour response time for catastrophic events.

Center Hardware relocated to Dogpatch in January 2017. Its history is rooted along the neighborhood's three miles of industrial eastern San Francisco. Dogpatch is one of the city's original mixed-use neighborhoods, and it perfectly reflects Center Hardware's customer base.

### **b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

For more than a century, Center Hardware and its two preceding companies have been an emergency supplier through two major earthquakes (1906 and 1989) and two pandemics (1918-1920 and 2020-2021). During the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989, Center Hardware ran a 24-hour schedule for more than a week. During the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, hardware stores were categorized as an "essential businesses." Center Hardware allowed their team members to walk away from their positions if they felt it was necessary to prioritize their personal needs and their families. All the employees chose to continue working at Center Hardware because they believe in what the business does and how they do it together.

### **c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

Center Hardware has been referenced in numerous publications, including 7x7, Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) of San Francisco, California Retail Hardware Association, KTVU FOX 2, HBS (Hardware + Building Supply) Dealer, Hardware Retailing, Hoodline, San Francisco Business Times, and SFMade Blog.

*137-Year-Old Center Hardware Puts Down New Roots In The Dogpatch*

<https://hoodline.com/2017/01/137-year-old-center-hardware-puts-down-new-roots-in-the-dogpatch/>

Hoodline

January 12, 2017

*City's oldest mom & pop hardware store relocates instead of closing*

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/citys-oldest-mom-pop-hardware-store-relocates-instead-of-closing>

KTVU FOX 2

January 27, 2017

*Center Hardware Marks 135th Anniversary by Moving to Bigger Location*

<http://magazine.thehardwareconnection.com/publication/frame.php?i=382877&p=62&pn=&ver=html5&pp=1&view=issueViewer>

The Hardware Connection

February 2017

*SF's Oldest Hardware Store Opens 20,000 Square-Foot Makers Paradise in Dogpatch*

<https://www.7x7.com/meet-the-woman-behind-sfs-oldest-hardware-store-2265955563.html>

7x7

February 17, 2017

*Family business thrives with customers like AT&T and BART despite forced move*

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/news/2017/02/23/gertner-center-hardware-retailing-family-business.html>

San Francisco Business Times

February 23, 2017

*Center Hardware*

<https://sfmade.org/blog/centerhardware/>

SFMade Blog

May 25, 2017

*Center Hardware & Supply moves to the Dogpatch*

<https://www.hbsdealer.com/hardware-stores/center-hardware-supply-moves-dogpatch>

HBS Dealer

February 7, 2018

*Good, Better, Best: Meet Jamie Gentner of Center Hardware*

<https://indogpatch.blogspot.com/2018/02/Jamie-Gentner-CenterHardware.html>

indogpatch

February 14, 2018

*In San Francisco, a hardware holdout with heart*

<https://www.hbsdealer.com/hardware-stores/san-francisco-hardware-holdout-heart>

HBS Dealer

March 6, 2018

*Introducing 2018 Top Gun Honoree Jamie Gentner*

<https://www.hardwareetailing.com/introducing-2018-top-gun-honoree-jamie-gentner/>

Hardware Retailing

April 26, 2018

*BOMA Associate Members Support Customers with Essential Services and New Solutions*

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5212ab3ee4b088f3b6714a93/t/5ef0ec82560a724a679d999f/1592847516356/Views\\_Q2\\_2020.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5212ab3ee4b088f3b6714a93/t/5ef0ec82560a724a679d999f/1592847516356/Views_Q2_2020.pdf) (page 8)

BOMA Views

Q2 2020

*Member Profile: Jamie Gentner at Center Hardware*

<https://crhwa.org/member-profile-jamie-gentner-at-center-hardware/>

California Retail Hardware Association

2020

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

At Center Hardware, every customer is a significant person. For more than 100 years, Center Hardware and its two preceding companies have been providing high-quality tools, industrial supplies, and products to trade professionals, contractors, homeowners, and Do-It-Yourselfers throughout the Bay Area. The store provides all customers with great products and exceptional service. Whether you need a single lightbulb in your home or enough to light up the entire Bay Bridge, you'll find what you're looking for at Center Hardware.

In addition to contractors and tradespeople, notable customers include: film and television productions like the Streets of San Francisco and Mythbusters and the current Martix / Marvel productions; specialty chefs such as Michael Recchiuti, Chris Cosentino, and Betty Zlatchin; state and local governments; award winning artists; world famous hotels and facilities including the Fairmont San Francisco and the Chase Arena; and internationally recognized local companies such as Heath Ceramics and Galanter & Jones.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Center Hardware strives to not only help build and maintain the community's physical structures, but contributes to its identity and spirit whenever possible. The business has supported local artists in establishing a community mural, donated materials for local high school students endeavoring to build a self-driven solar boat, opened their parking lot to host a weekend open-air market for local makers, hosted Toolapalooza – a one-of-a kind celebration of the trades annually – and hosted a yearly fundraiser that has raised thousands of dollars to support the trades in John O'Connell High School.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

Although Center Hardware is located in the Dogpatch, one of San Francisco's last true mixed-use neighborhoods, the business serves the entire community of San Francisco. Center Hardware has helped the city grow from dirt streets and horse-drawn carriages to the thriving metropolis it is today. Center Hardware's community is the wonderfully diverse population of San Francisco and its equally diverse building and maintenance needs, from high rises and high tech to historic Victorian renovations.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

Center Hardware has a highly curated collection of antique tools and machines relating to the industry over the last century. These objects are on display in the conference room.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

Center Hardware has come to be known not only as the place to go for hard to find parts specific to older San Francisco buildings, but also for its knowledgeable and helpful staff. Center Hardware provides full time employment and benefits for more than 30 people and has helped San Francisco through earthquakes, pandemics, economic downturns, a depression, and recessions all without laying off a single staff member. If Center Hardware were to close, San Francisco would lose a hardware store with exceptional service and hundreds of years of knowledge and resourcefulness.

**CRITERION 3**

**a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

Center Hardware stocks over 100,000 products from hundreds of vendors across all key departments including hand and power tools and accessories, hardware and fasteners, plumbing, electrical, personal protection equipment (PPE) and safety, lawn and garden, paint and sundries, heating and cooling, automotive, farm and agriculture and more. Center Hardware has access to the entire lines of tools for all tool suppliers including Milwaukee Tool, STIHL, Stabila, Kreg, BOSCH, Freud / Diablo, Makita and Kelly-Moore Paints.

Center Hardware is an official authorized dealer of Kelly-Moore Paints. Center Hardware offers professional mixing and color matching services for painting contractors, builders, property managers, designers, galleries, and individuals. Commercial contractor and volume discounts available. The store is also an authorized distributor for painters' tools, equipment, and parts from Graco, Wagner, and Titan. In-stock products Kelly-Moore's Color Studio Collection, featuring more than 1,700 colors in addition to the ready-mix collection. Kelly-Moore Paints



was chosen by Center Hardware because they are a local California paint company and an ESOP (employee stock ownership plan) company.

To give their customers a better idea of the breadth of product, Center Hardware has an uploaded [virtual tour online](#), a shoppable catalog, and [a robust brand listing](#) available on their website. Customers may use these tools to request quotes and estimates before committing to a purchase in store. Many Center customers still prefer paper catalogs for portability and research, so those are available at no cost in five categories: Commercial / Industrial, Tools & Equipment, MRO (maintenance, repair, and operations), Building Materials, and Farm & Agriculture.

Center Hardware created the world's first Tool Replacement Program. As jobsite theft and truck break-ins reached all-time highs in the Bay Area, Center wanted to find a way to help the professionals get back to work quickly. Center recruited industry-leading Milwaukee Tool to partner with them on this program. Now, with only a police report as proof, tradespeople can replace what was taken at a discount.

Center Hardware is the only location south of Folsom Street in SOMA and east of Sanchez Street in Noe Valley where you can buy SFMTA parking cards. They are one of only two locations in San Francisco where you may purchase valid California hunting and fishing licenses. The other location is Big 5 Sporting Goods on Sloat Blvd. by Lake Merced, so Center Hardware services the entire eastern side of San Francisco. Clipper Cards are also available at Center, servicing the surrounding area.

Center Hardware uses decades of experience to source hard to find items and special orders for customers daily. Additional services Center Hardware provides are:

- Only full-line dealer for STIHL in San Francisco and authorized repair center.
- Residential recycling drop-off location for latex paint, batteries, and fluorescent bulbs.
- Bin maintenance.
- Delivery.
- Curbside pickup.
- Customer messaging across platforms including telephone, social media, texting, and email.

Center Hardware is a certified small business with the State of California, and a certified Local Business Enterprise (LBE) with the City and County of San Francisco.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

Center Hardware is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as a hardware store.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

When Center Hardware moved from Mariposa Street to 3rd Street, the building was painted nearly the same way for customer recognition, with a brick-red-colored body, cream background with black logo and lettering.

Center Hardware has a highly curated collection of antique tools and machines relating to the industry over the last century. These objects are on display in the conference room.

**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a hardware store for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

AFTER THE FIRE & EARTHQUAKE 1906.



AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE & FIRE 1906.





1<sup>ST</sup> STORE DESTROYED BY FIRE  
JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup> 1895



INTERIOR NEW STORE AFTER  
FIRE JUNE 27-1895.



NEW STORE AFTER FIRE JUNE 27-1895.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE & FIRE 1906.



# OCEAN VIEW HARDWARE

HARDWARE, PAINTS-OILS

GLASS HOUSEHOLD GOODS

*and Sell  
Black Silk  
Sage Black  
no steel*





OCEANVIEW HDWE.



TOOL-RENTALS

HARDWARE

TOOL RENTAL

GLASS

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Sunshine

# HARDWARE



## OCEAN VIEW HARDWARE

2 SADOWA ST., COR. SAN JOSE AND SADOWA  
JU. 5-2030

SAN FRANCISCO 12, CALIF., \_\_\_\_\_ 195\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_



REG. NO.	CLERK	ACCOUNT FORWARDED		
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				

6

YOUR ACCOUNT STATED TO DATE. IF ERROR IS FOUND RETURN AT ONCE.  
R. A. SALESBOOK CO. - 1742 MILWAUKEE AVE., CHICAGO 47, ILL.





SMITH GLASS CO.

BLUXOME CAFE

LUNCH

GOOD FOOD

BREAKFAST LUNCH

OPEN 6A

Carrier AIR CONDITIONING

CENTER HARDWARE CO. FREE CUSTOMER PARKING INDUSTRIAL HARDWARE SUPPLIES

Gatorade doesn't pause before it refreshes.

RENTON HOTEL

RENTON HARDWARE CO.

S.W. 1st

N. 1st



INDUSTRIAL • HARDWARE • TOOLS • PAINT • FASTENERS • PLUMBING • ELECTRICAL

CUSTOMER  
ENTRANCE

3003 3RD ST.

7-5 M-F  
9-5 SAT

erving  
SAN FRANCISCO  
1884  
135 YEARS  
and COUNTING!  
1889

CENTER  
HARDWARE  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
MON-FRI 7-5  
SAT 9-5



# CUSTOMER ENTRANCE

7-5 M-F  
9-5 SAT

NOTICE  
PLEASE DO NOT  
REMOVE THIS SIGN



NO SMOKING  
WITHIN 20 FEET  
OF ENTRANCES AND  
EXITS AND OPERABLE  
WINDOWS





12

HARDWARE

Closets/Shelving

Garage Organization

Sign & Numbers

11

HARDWARE

Door Locks

Door/Window Hardware

Home Safety

Mail Boxes/Posts

10

HARDWARE

Power Tools

Auto Hardware

Tools/Equipment

Screen Repair

Auto Hardware

The Original Green Rags  
506229  
SMART

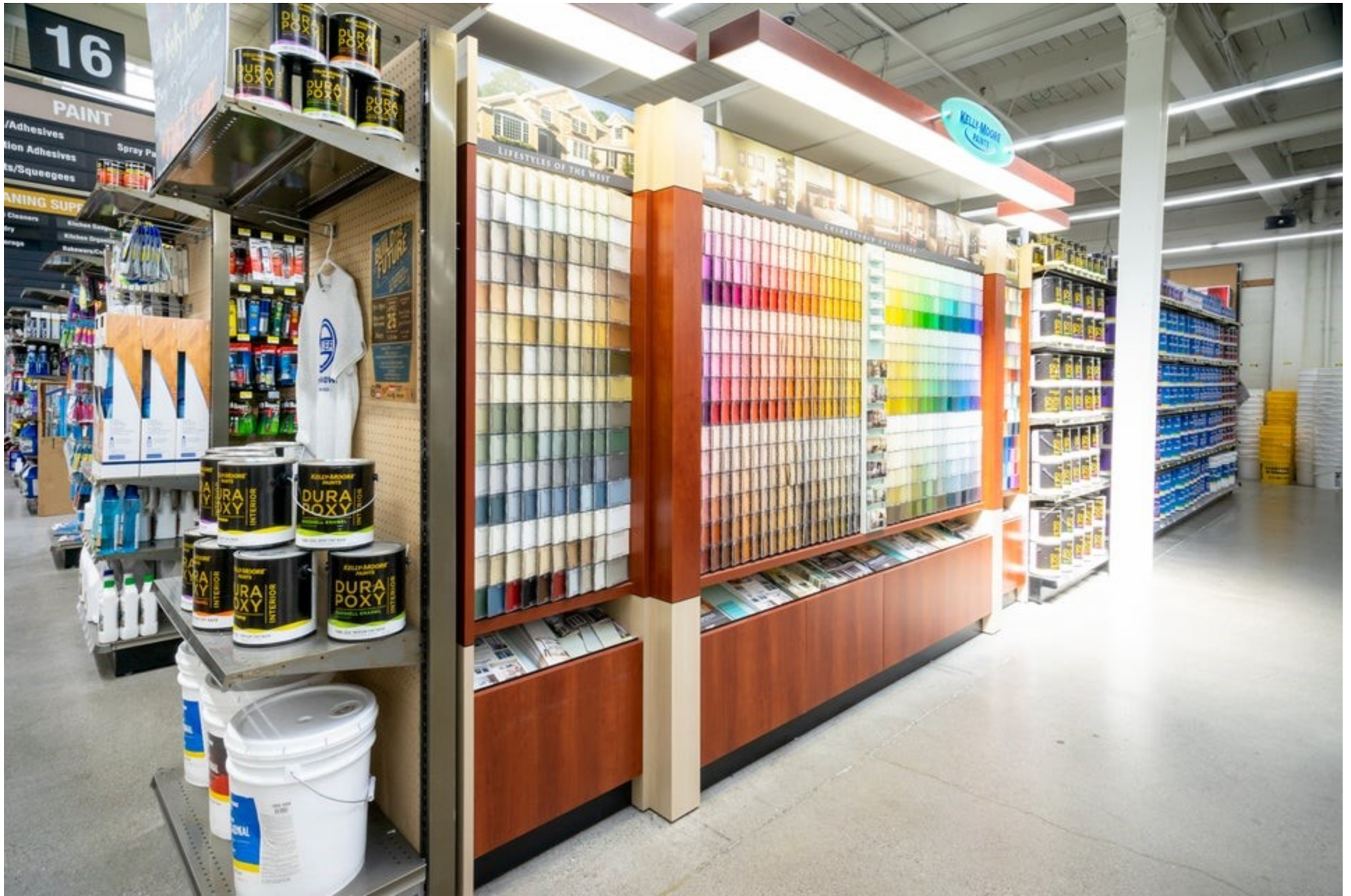
506203

506216

HARRIS













**CENTER HARDWARE**

# IT'S TIME TO MOVE!

JOIN US AT OUR NEW LOCATION - 3003 3RD STREET, SF



## CENTER HARDWARE

OPEN TO PUBLIC

EXCELLENCE  
IN  
SERVICE



- Expanded Parking
- Easy Freeway Access
- The Only Milwaukee Tool Destination Store in SF
- The Only Certified Full Line Dealer For Stabila (CFLD) in SF
- Special Orders
- Paint Mixing and Custom Services
- Custom Signs
- Recycling For Latex Paint, Batteries, and Fluorescent Bulbs
- Free Delivery in the Bay Area For Orders Over \$75
- Certified Local Business Enterprise (LBE) with the city of SF

MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:00AM - 5:00PM • SATURDAYS 9:00AM - 5:00PM

## GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

Join us from 10:30AM - 5:00PM

Enjoy food trucks, special discounts, vendor demonstrations and product giveaways!

## DON'T MISS OUR RIBBON CUTTING AT 10:30AM

First 50 guests will receive a free gift!

FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1880



3003 3RD STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

WWW.CENTERHARDWARE.COM

415-861-1800



# 137-Year-Old Center Hardware Puts Down New Roots In The Dogpatch



Center Hardware's old Mariposa Street location. (Photo: [Center Hardware](#).)

By [Jack Morse](#) - Published on January 12, 2017.

The doors of Mariposa Street's Center Hardware & Supply Co. closed on December 23rd, and to the casual passerby it may have appeared yet another case of an independently owned business forced to shutter by its big-box competitors.

Happily, that couldn't be further from the truth. Instead, the 137-year-old hardware store is expanding—moving its operations from the edge of Potrero Hill to a 20,000-square-foot retail location in the Dogpatch.

The new Center Hardware opened on January 3rd at 3003 Third St. To celebrate, the business is hosting a grand opening party on January 27th. Beginning at 10:30am and lasting all day, the event will include food trucks, discounts, and product giveaways.

Co-owned by father-daughter team Keith and Jamie Gentner, Center Hardware has been in business in various incarnations since 1880. Originally opened as PA Smith Hardware & Glass, the company has undergone several moves over the years—including a relocation after the 1906 quake—before landing on Mariposa Street in 1987. After nearly 30 years in Potrero Hill, the Gentners, who have run Center Hardware since 1980, are excited about the business's next step.

"Our new location will make it even easier to shop with us and we have expanded our inventory to offer our wide-range of customers even more products that are available immediately," explained Jamie Gentner in a press release.

Indeed, the configuration of the new Dogpatch store allows the Gentners to stock 30 percent more products than they could at the Mariposa Street location. And those products will serve a wide array of customers, as Jaime Gentner counts everyone from local handymen to the city of San Francisco as clients—proudly noting [on her website](#) that she provides officials with bulbs to light the Bay Bridge.



Center Hardware's staff, pictured the night before opening day. | **Photo: Center Hardware/[Facebook](#)**

“We like to say we are woven into the fabric of this city,” she further explained. “Whether you are a home owner who needs a single light bulb or a city contractor who needs bulbs for the entire Bay Bridge, we can supply what you need and our sales staff will treat you like a king.”

All has not been easy in their new home, as [the recent storms](#) forced the Gentners to get creative to address a leaky ceiling. Thankfully, as a hardware store, they have plenty of tools at their disposal, and were able to use a funnel and plastic tubing to direct the rain to buckets. Just the kind of solution you'd expect from a father-daughter team with hardware stores in their blood.



Inside the new location. | PHOTO: CENTER HARDWARE/[FACEBOOK](#)

<https://www.7x7.com/meet-the-woman-behind-sfs-oldest-hardware-store-2265955563.html>



# SF's Oldest Hardware Store Opens 20,000 Square-Foot Makers Paradise in Dogpatch

By [Cheryl Locke](#)

Feb 17, 2017



A treasure trove for the city's builders and DIYers, Center Hardware is one of the few remaining independent hardware stores left in the age of Amazon—and now it has a new HQ, packed with all the trappings a maker (or burner) could want.

There are literally thousands of reasons to shop **Center Hardware's** new 20,000 square-foot retail space on Third Street in Dogpatch: The 65,000-item inventory includes 500 different cans of spray paint, a head-turning assortment of obsession-worthy Yeti coolers, and a shop-in-shop devoted to the legacy power tool brand Milwaukee. Whether you're looking for discontinued Victorian hinges or toilet flappers, the long-time staff (one employee has worked there for 39 years!) has seen and knows it all. And, a friendly concierge desk is there to problem-solve, not to judge.

"The burners all show up right before Burning Man—we love hearing about their camps and art installations," says proprietor Jamie Gentner. "They come here for metal, lighting ideas, batteries, headlamps, tools, and Yeti. It's an incredibly creative community."



Jamie Gentner (left) is Center Hardware's fourth-generation owner.

Some may be surprised to learn that the iconic hardware haven is helmed by a woman: Jamie Gentner is Center's fourth-generation owner; she's minded the store (formerly located on Mariposa Street in Potrero Hill) with her father, Keith Gentner, since 1980. If you count Keith's previous store, Ocean View Hardware, Center Hardware and the family's predecessor stores have served San Francisco since the late 1800s.

Here, Jamie Gentner talks to 7x7 about Center's grand re-opening and the city, then and now.

**7x7: When you closed the Mariposa Street location last December, some people thought you had permanently closed. Do you want to set the record straight?**

Jamie Gentner: It was very hard to combat that message—many of our customers aren't on social media [all day], they are working with tools on job sites. Our new location has plenty of parking, wider aisles, and isn't as cold. We are one of the few people in San Francisco with a good landlord story — [our landlord] happily offered us this new location after he decided to develop [the old location on] Mariposa Street.

**7x7: How are you different from your big box counterparts?**

JG: We are a heaven for fixers and makers. The thing that sets us apart from places like Lowe's is our customer service and depth of inventory. Since we don't belong to a chain, that gives us a tremendous amount of flexibility. We are a resourceful group of people who have been here for a long time. When the city ran out of sandbags during last year's storm, Chris [Wallace, Center Hardware's long-time buyer] got in a truck and drove down to Santa Cruz to get more. We have the independence to dispatch people to do that. During the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, my dad slept on the front counter so we could stay open 24 hours a day for four days straight while the city tried to sort out and contain the damage. Everyone needed everything, from padlocks, chain, gas cans, wood, batteries, and Shop-Vacs. It was intense.



**7x7: You've said Center Hardware wouldn't be the way it is today without your dad. Tell us how you work together.**

JG: My dad just turned 70. He has skills and qualities that are irreplaceable. He used to read parts catalogs for fun, and he just absorbed it all. He's amazing with that type of stuff. He leaves the daily operations and logistics with me; sometimes that includes mountains of paperwork. It leaves him time to do what he's best at, which is sourcing stuff. He's so jazzed when he sees this broken thing from 30 years ago that isn't made anymore, and he finds the work-around. It's a gift he has and our customers benefit.

**7x7: How has the business evolved?**

JG: My dad came from the neighborhood store. At the time, [Ocean View Hardware] was primarily a shipyard business, and we now have very little shipyard business. Now we work with the city, facility engineers, hotels, contractors, schools, and SFO. We have a big, robust customer base. And that's what makes us a great equalizer. We have the homeowner, the art student, the burner, the facility engineer, Anchor Brewing, Recchiuti Confections, and The Fairmont. And everybody is treated the same. They all have a problem, and they come here to solve it.

**7x7: Has it been a challenge for you to navigate such a male-dominated industry?**

JG: It's hard for me to answer that. I grew up in this industry. I started when I was 11, and I've been here full-time since '98. It can be hard to navigate at times...it comes down to people and to respect. Are you going to treat someone credibly as a person? It shouldn't have anything to do with my gender. The customer who growls at me should also be growling at him. But, you can't change everybody. There's definitely sexism that exists, but I also get that at the mall. I don't isolate it to a work thing.



A nod to Center Hardware's history in San Francisco.

**7x7: What would you say to customers who aren't very handy?**

JG: Be confident! Holding a drill is intimidating. And you don't know anyone who has a drill anymore, so you can't ask someone to show you how. The thing is, you can.

**7x7: Does your team ever get stumped by customer questions?**

JG: When we're not quite sure how to answer a question, we totally admit that and kick into research mode. Sometimes, we'll even call our customer who's over there (Jamie points into the store) and get them to answer the question, and now two people have learned. We try to facilitate that kind of thing all day long because that empowers everyone. The customer is happy because he got the information he needed. And my staff learned something. It's a win-win for our store to be this resource.

## **7x7: Any recommendations for DIY beginners?**

JG: We're lucky in San Francisco. There are places like Workshop SF, Wood Thumb, San Francisco Community Wood Shop, Noisebridge, and TechShop that do DIY classes all the time. City College has courses in furniture making, construction, upholstery, among other things. [There's] Revere Academy for jewelry making. The Crucible and NIMBY are in Oakland. SF Etsy is a great group. I want people to know that they can learn hands on. There is also a goldmine of credible information online from tool companies and how-to places like Instructables and Ana White. We wouldn't be Center Hardware if we didn't encourage people to want to learn trades again. Our plumbers, electricians, carpenters, engineers, and mechanics are all in short number in San Francisco. There are amazing apprenticeship programs through our local unions.

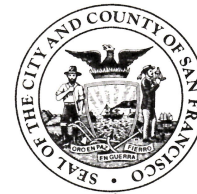
*// Center Hardware, 3003 Third St. (Dogpatch), [centerhardware.com](http://centerhardware.com)*

**Office of the Treasurer  
& Tax Collector**

**City and County of San Francisco**

City Hall , Room 140

#1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102



**José Cisneros, Treasurer**

Phone: (415) 554-4478

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Dear Business Owner,

On April 7, 2006, I was joined by Assemblyman Mark Leno, Mayor Gavin Newsom, and Small Business Commission President Jordanna Thigpen at Brownie's Hardware on Polk Street to honor over 60 businesses that have been doing business in San Francisco since before the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. This event was part of the city-wide "San Francisco Rising" commemoration

Your business was identified as a 100-year old San Francisco business, and we are pleased to honor you with a Certificate of Honor signed by Mayor Newsom, and a commendation from the Office of the Treasurer.

Congratulations to you and your colleagues on this remarkable achievement.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line at the bottom.

José Cisneros  
Treasurer

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



# CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

NUMBER 40113

## WATER BOND

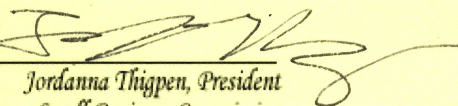
NUMBER 40113


*For value received, the City and County of San Francisco, a municipal corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, hereby acknowledges itself indebted*

### Center Hardware

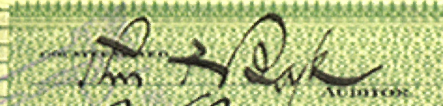
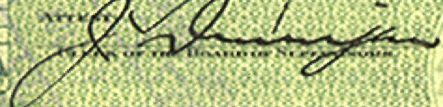
*In honor of over 100 years of dedicated commitment to doing business in San Francisco;  
For your leadership and courage during the recovery period after the 1906 earthquake and fire;  
For your unrelenting entrepreneurial spirit which contributes so much to the fabric of San Francisco;*


*Treasurer José Cisneros and Jordanna Thigpen, President of the Small Business Commission, are proud to commend Center Hardware in honor of San Francisco Rising, 2006*

By:   
Jordanna Thigpen, President  
Small Business Commission

By:   
José Cisneros, Treasurer  
City and County of San Francisco

Presented on April 7, 2006

  
AUDITOR  
  
Treasurer

  
John Emekheru  
Treasurer



*The City and County of San Francisco*

# *Certificate of Honor*

*Presented To*

## **Center Hardware**

**April 7, 2006**

*Whereas*, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I am pleased to recognize and honor *Center Hardware* in recognition of the *San Francisco Rising 1906 Earthquake and Fire Commemoration*. Thank you for your outstanding and lasting contribution to the City and County of San Francisco. Best wishes and good luck in your future endeavors!



*THEREFORE, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom".

*Gavin Newsom  
Mayor*

# Assembly

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## CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

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### *Center Hardware*

*Est. 1880s*

*In honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906, I congratulate you for being a member of the "Century Club" of San Francisco's Bay Area. I commend your endurance, dedication and commitment to the community and wish you continued success for many years to come. Congratulations and thank you for all that you do!*



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Leno".

MARK LENO  
Assemblyman, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006

# Certificate of Honor

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS City and County of San Francisco

*The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for 'outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:*

### **Center Hardware & Supply Co.**

In honor of Center Hardware's 135 years of business and contribution to the City of San Francisco and in special recognition of your new location in the Dogpatch neighborhood.

The City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisor hereby extends their highest commendations and sends their best wishes to you on this special day

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SUPERVISOR MALIA COHEN

January 27, 2017







# LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: January 6, 2021**

*Filing Date:* December 9, 2020  
*Case No.:* **2020-011546LBR**  
*Business Name:* Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.  
*Business Address:* 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street  
*Zoning:* PDR-1-G (Production, Distribution & Repair - 1 – General) Zoning District  
85-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 4314/001A  
*Applicant:* Jamie Gentner  
3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London Breed  
*Located In:* District 10  
*Staff Contact:* Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607  
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

**Recommendation:** Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

## Business Description

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. is a retail hardware store, opened originally by Heinz Solbach at 638 4<sup>th</sup> Street in September 1946. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc has roots dating back to two hardware stores, P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass, and Ocean View Hardware, both founded in San Francisco in the late 1880s. The two stores eventually merged to become what is known today as Center Hardware. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. is one of the largest independent hardware stores in San Francisco, boasting an inventory of 100,000 different items from a diverse array of hardware brands. It not only sells a vast inventory of hardware and industrial supplies for any type of project, but also offers numerous hardware-related services and programs to its customers. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has been continuously family-owned and operated by the Gentner Family since 1980.

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. first opened in 1946 in the South of Market neighborhood at 638 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where it remained until 1988, moving to a much larger location at 999 Mariposa Street, to accommodate a

rapidly growing hardware inventory. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. remained in its second location until 1988, when it lost its lease. Rather than closing, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. moved to its current location in Dogpatch at 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street in 2017, maintaining its distinctive red-brick-colored look, with cream and black lettering, and black circular logo. Located in a classic industrial warehouse building, its current location at 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street in Dogpatch allows Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. the space and ability to stock an expansive inventory, as well as ample room for store stocking and loading. Its Dogpatch location also accommodates customer parking, delivery, drop-off, and curbside hardware services. Further, honoring its long history as a hardware store, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. also maintains a curated collection of antique tools and machines, which is displayed within the store.

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.'s customers vary from residents, artists, trade professionals, homeowners, businesses, contractors, building engineers, construction companies, property managers, and even City departments, carrying out projects that range from small home-repair projects to large scale infrastructure and high rises. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.'s welcoming and knowledgeable staff is ready to help any customer, regardless of technical knowledge and ability, find the hardware they need for their particular project.

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. continues to give back to the community it serves, particularly the eastern neighborhoods of San Francisco. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has engaged local artists and tradespeople in commissioning a community mural, donates materials and tools to local high school students, including holding an annual fundraiser to support trades education at John O'Connell High School, donates space for local makers to sell their products, and has even hosted Toolapalooza, an event celebrating the trades. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. also serves the larger community by selling Clipper Cards and SFMTA parking cards. For its lasting service and contribution to San Francisco, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. was given a Certificate of Honor from the Board of Supervisors in 2017.

Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc, including its historic two predecessors, has also been an emergency hardware and industrial supplier through both the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and Loma Preita Earthquake in 1989, and two pandemics. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. was formally recognized in 2006 for its emergency efforts by the California State Assembly, City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Treasurer, and the Small Business Commission as part of *San Francisco Rising*, a citywide commemoration of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906.

The business's primary location at 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street is a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure on the east side of 03<sup>rd</sup> Street between Cesar Chavez and 25<sup>th</sup> Streets in the Dogpatch neighborhood. It is within a PDR-1-G (Production, Distribution & Repair - 1 - General) Zoning District and an 85-X Height and Bulk District. It is also located within the Central Waterfront Eastern Neighborhoods Planning Area and a Green Benefit District. 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street is also subject to the Dogpatch Public Realm Plan.

## Staff Analysis

### Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1946.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc has operated continuously in San Francisco for 74 years.
- b. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc has contributed to the history and identity of the SoMa and Dogpatch neighborhoods and San Francisco.
- c. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

No.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., as it's known today, was born from the merger of two longtime San Francisco hardware stores in the 1980s. The first, P.A. Smith Hardware & Glass, was originally founded in the late 1880s. The second, Ocean View Hardware, was founded in the 1890s. Both older hardware stores were destroyed at their original downtown locations by the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and were subsequently re-built at different locations within San Francisco.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No. The businesses' primary location, a warehouse located at 3003 03rd Street is in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure. 3003 03rd Street was included in the Central Waterfront Historic Survey (2001), where it received a California Historical Resource status code of "7N1" (needs to be reevaluated – may become eligible for National Register with restoration or when meets other specific conditions).

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. There have been a number of local features and articles on Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., both within and outside the industry. Outside of the industry, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has been covered in local media in articles from KTVU Fox 2, Hoodline, 7x7, and The San Francisco Business Times. Inside of the industry, Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. has been featured in industry magazines such as The Hardware

Connection, Hardware Retailing, and Hardware Building and Supply Dealer. Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc., has also been featured in articles from hardware industry groups such as SFMade, Building Owners and Managers Association of San Francisco, and the California Hardware Retail Association.

### **Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business**

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

##### Current Locations:

- 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street (2017 – Present)

##### Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 638 4<sup>th</sup> Street (1946 – 1988)
- 999 Mariposa Street (1988 – 2017)

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Hardware store
- Store building painted with a brick-red-colored body, painted cream lettering, circular black logo
- Curated display collection of antique tools and machines
- Diversity of hardware and tool brands and stock
- Wide range of hardware customer services (recycling drop-off location for latex paint, batteries, and fluorescent bulbs, bin maintenance, delivery, curbside pickup, tool repair, online and paper product catalog, tool replacement program)
- Sale of SFMTA parking cards, Clipper Cards, and California fishing and hunting licenses

#### **Additional Recommended by Staff**

- Engagement with San Francisco trades community and support of trades education at John O'Connell High School

## Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

### ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. ###

**HEARING DATE: JANUARY 6, 2021**

*Case No.:* **2020-011546LBR**  
*Business Name:* Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.  
*Business Address:* 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street  
*Zoning:* PDR-1-G (Production, Distribution & Repair - 1 – General) Zoning District  
85-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 4314/001A  
*Applicant:* Jamie Gentner  
3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
*Nominated By:* Mayor London Breed  
*Located In:* District 10  
*Staff Contact:* Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607  
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR CENTER HARDWARE & SUPPLY CO., INC CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3003 03<sup>RD</sup> STREET, BLOCK/LOT 4314/001A.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 6, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Center Hardware & Supply Co., Inc.

*Location(s):*

Current Locations:

- 3003 03<sup>rd</sup> Street (2017 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 638 4<sup>th</sup> Street (1946 – 1988)
- 999 Mariposa Street (1988 – 2017)

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:*

- Hardware store
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- Sale of SFMTA parking cards, Clipper Cards, and California fishing and hunting licenses
- Engagement with San Francisco trades community and support of trades education at John O’Connell High School

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission’s findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business January 6, 2021.

Jonas P. Ionin  
*Commission Secretary*

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: January 6, 2021