

[Abbey Carpet Lays Out its Reputation with Every Carpet](#)

John Kopas has been in the carpet business for 34 years. As co-owner of Abbey Carpet of Mounds View, he is part of the nationwide retailer Abbey Carpet that has over 1,000 stores. Kopas has stayed in business longer than any other Abbey Carpet franchisee in the country except for one in San Francisco.

Kopas began his retail journey with stints at Western Auto in St. Paul (where he was the youngest manager at the time), manager at W.T. Grants (a large dime store in downtown St. Paul), and manager of the department store Freeman's (a variety store in Minneapolis). In 1972 he read an ad in the newspaper that said, 'Do you want to own your own business?' Kopas had been working hard for everyone else and thought maybe this was the opportunity to build something for his family and himself. It turned out to be a carpet franchise business opportunity.



*Abbey Carpet of Mounds View Co-Owners
John Kopas & Tom Link*

Abbey Carpet, begun in Sacramento and now headquartered in Bonita Springs, Florida, is the largest and oldest (50 years) carpet franchise business in the world. It was the first to advertise on television, the first to give warranties, the first to offer free credit, and this year the first to offer free air miles (most people now pay with credit cards). Once John was able to come up with \$8,000 for setting up the franchise, Milt Levison's franchise organization helped find a location and set up Kopas' first retail showroom in 1973 in the Brighton Village Shopping Center where he operated in 2,500 sq. ft for 30 years. He began with two employees, working 12 hour days, six days a week.

In 2002 Kopas started working with Aaron Backman, Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Mounds View to find a new store location. Ultimately Kopas selected a site north of The Mermaid (the former Perkins Restaurant site) to build the Highway 10 Business Center. In November 2003 he opened the new store. Today, Abbey Carpet of Mounds View boasts a new 8,500 sq. ft. showroom, a 5,000 sq. ft warehouse, employs 10 people and subcontracts with 12 installers.

For over 20 years John Kopas has served on the Board of Directors of Abbey Carpet (at the national level). Kopas' concern for the customer is evident by the fact that his franchise has won three Trillium awards by the Builders Association of Minnesota in recognition of their superior carpet installation. Three years ago he was honored by the Minnesota Floor Covering Association as the 2004 Carpet Dealer of the Year.

Last spring Kopas and his partner Tom Link, were quite pleased that Abbey Carpet of Mounds View received a 100% score in the categories of reliability and overall customer service by Checkbook.org, a consumer survey publication. They were the only one to get a perfect score—trumping other carpet retailers and other Abbey Carpet franchises in the Twin Cities. Kopas is open about the things that have made his business successful. It starts with his employees, many of whom have been with him over 20 years. “Treat them like they have ownership in the company, pay them a good salary and commission and have them share in the store’s planning and decisionmaking,” he says. Adds co-owner Tom Link, “The quality of the staff is so important . . .we have experienced people.”

Through its years of operation Abbey Carpet has worked with a variety of customers. Among them were Ruth Koscielak of WCCO fame, and Kirby Puckett of the Minnesota Twins. And, yes, Kirby’s home included a #34 in a home plate tile pattern! Whether it is a six-by-six bathroom floor covering or hardwood and ceramic tile for a million dollar home, Abbey Carpet of Mounds View takes care of the customer.