

REI Holidays

1. Noun - Plural
2. Proper Noun

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Denver Noun - Plural were pleasantly surprised when a new "store within a store" appeared near the co-op's front entrance in October. It's impossible not to notice this colorful, interactive The Proper Noun Face "pop-up shop," where their ThermoBall collection takes a place of pride under an impressive mural of Mount Everest.

"It's a real eye grabber," says Pete Citrano, Denver general manager. "It doesn't just say who The North Face is; it catches people's attention and pulls them in--they can't help but walk up and see what it's all about."

The North Face pop-up is one of two introduced as part of an REI merchandising pilot program. The second is a SmartWool "store," which recently opened in Seattle. Five other stores--Madison, Lincoln Park, SoHo, San Carlos, Redmond and Norwalk--will also test this innovative product highlighting program. The project is testing out new signage and display techniques to elevate the presence of these brands in their existing locations on the floor.

Showcasing great outdoor brands

"REI is a 'house of brands,' and we pride ourselves on having the best outdoor brands our customers are looking for," says Michele Orr, director of merchandising management. "But right now, the brands don't show up in our retail

stores. You see great merchandise, but you don't see the great brands we offer. This program directly showcases some of our key national brands."

"This house of brands pilot is our first step in an overall goal to improve the customer experience in our soft goods departments. We are keenly aware of the importance of elevating brand stories more than we have in the past. It's all about storytelling," says Elizabeth Dowd, director of store design and visual merchandising. "We want to make soft goods more dynamic and move beyond a sea of store fixtures where everything is at one level and nothing stands out."