



J's Market Grill welcomed with open arms to Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - The smell of meat grilling welcomed members of the community to the grand opening of **J's Market Grill** Friday afternoon.

The restaurant, owned by Jason Harrison, opened the last week of April to tremendous community response. With a menu featuring grilled favorites such as snoots, turkey ribs,

wings and pulled pork and a fried selection including catfish, buffalo fish and Southern-style okra, J's Market Grill has seen a non-stop flow of business since the day it opened its doors. Harrison said he was grateful for the amount of community support he has seen. The grand opening celebration spanning from Friday, July 1, to Saturday, July 2, is Harrison's way of thanking the community for their business.

"It's been great," Harrison said. "The community response has been enormous. Business is good and everyone has been extremely welcoming."

Harrison purchased the former Dairy Queen building on Washington and gave it some renovations. He outfitted the interior with wood plank work done by his friend, Peter Hough, and removed the freezer to allow for more customer space. The grill Harrison uses is now housed behind the building in a wooden shelter. He said more changes were sure to come in the future.

"This Wednesday, my wife, Kayla, officially joins on as an employee," Harrison said. "She will bring some new items to the menu as well."

Kayla Harrison said she would be offering pulled pork tacos and nachos when she joins the staff this week.

Besides the new menu options, Harrison said he has partnered with his friend, Timothy Samuels, who is an independent caterer. Harrison said Samuels is bringing his own clientele with him to the partnership. Harrison has added clients as well. They even gave away a free catering job for as many as 15 people at the grand opening event.

Other items given away at the celebration included children's toys and bicycles. Most of the funding for those giveaways were donated by the community, Harrison said.

"The community has been great to us," Harrison said. "They provided us with most of the donations for today's giveaways. Very little came out of my pocket for those."

Another way J's Market Grill has shown gratitude to the community is having "Senior Day" every Thursday during which senior citizens can enjoy a meal for \$5. Harrison is also waiting for state approval to open the market aspect of his establishment. One of his original goals was to provide the community with healthy food and possibly cook it for them as well. He said he wanted to do it and allow for people to use EBT to make purchases. Currently, J's Market Grill is cash only.

J's Market Grill is located at 1808 Washington Ave. in Alton. It can be reached at (618) 374-6038.