



J's Market Grill seeks new home

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - J's Market Grill, once located at 1808 Washington Ave. in Alton, is looking for a new home after business owner, **Jason Harrison**, and building owner, **Dave Bailey**, could not agree on a price for purchasing the property.

Harrison said he offered a sum of \$90,000 for the building, which once housed a **Dairy Queen** franchise, but Bailey wanted a higher price, which was out of Harrison's range. Harrison said other buildings in the area were priced at below \$80,000. He said he invested much of his own money into the barbecue joint, including \$10,000 in renovations to the building, but could not afford the current asking price.

Because of the lack of an agreement, J's Market Grill is closed indefinitely while Harrison searches for a new home for the business. He said he would like to find a location with similar demographics to the building on Washington.

"I want to be in an impoverished or neglected area," he said. "I feel like our prices reflect that. I think our business is built for lower income or working class people."

Prices at J's Market Grill were usually around \$7.50 for a complete meal with two sides. He also featured special discounts for seniors.

From the location on Washington, Harrison and his team have taken the initiative to give back to their community. On the day before Thanksgiving in 2016, Harrison and his caterer, **Timothy Samuels** worked together to smoke several turkeys and give them to people in need. On Christmas Eve 2016, Harrison did the same with honey-baked hams. He was planning on doing a giveaway on Easter 2017 as well.

While Harrison does not hold a grudge against Bailey, he believes what is happening to him is indicative of what is happening across the Riverbend. He believes many people invested in buildings and want a return on that investment, which is not inherently a bad thing to Harrison. Many of these buildings have decreased in value due to wear and tear as well as echoes from the 2008 Great Recession.

Despite those facts, many building owners would like a return on their investment regardless, Harrison said. He said if the owners of these buildings would take a loss, several new businesses could spring from those decisions, saying entrepreneurs require space to make their dreams a reality. He was also understanding about the financial woes it could bring to those building owners.

If a new building cannot be found, however, Harrison said he may take his barbecue on the road.

"I'm looking into getting a food truck," Harrison said. "Even though **Madison County** has an ordinance against them, I could take them to our neighboring counties."

That law against food trucks in Madison County is another roadblock to progress, Harrison said. He said people are searching for ways to make their dreams and goals incarnate with limit resources, or without going into too much debt. He said food trucks are one of those ways, and believes they are becoming "the way of the future" outside of Madison County.