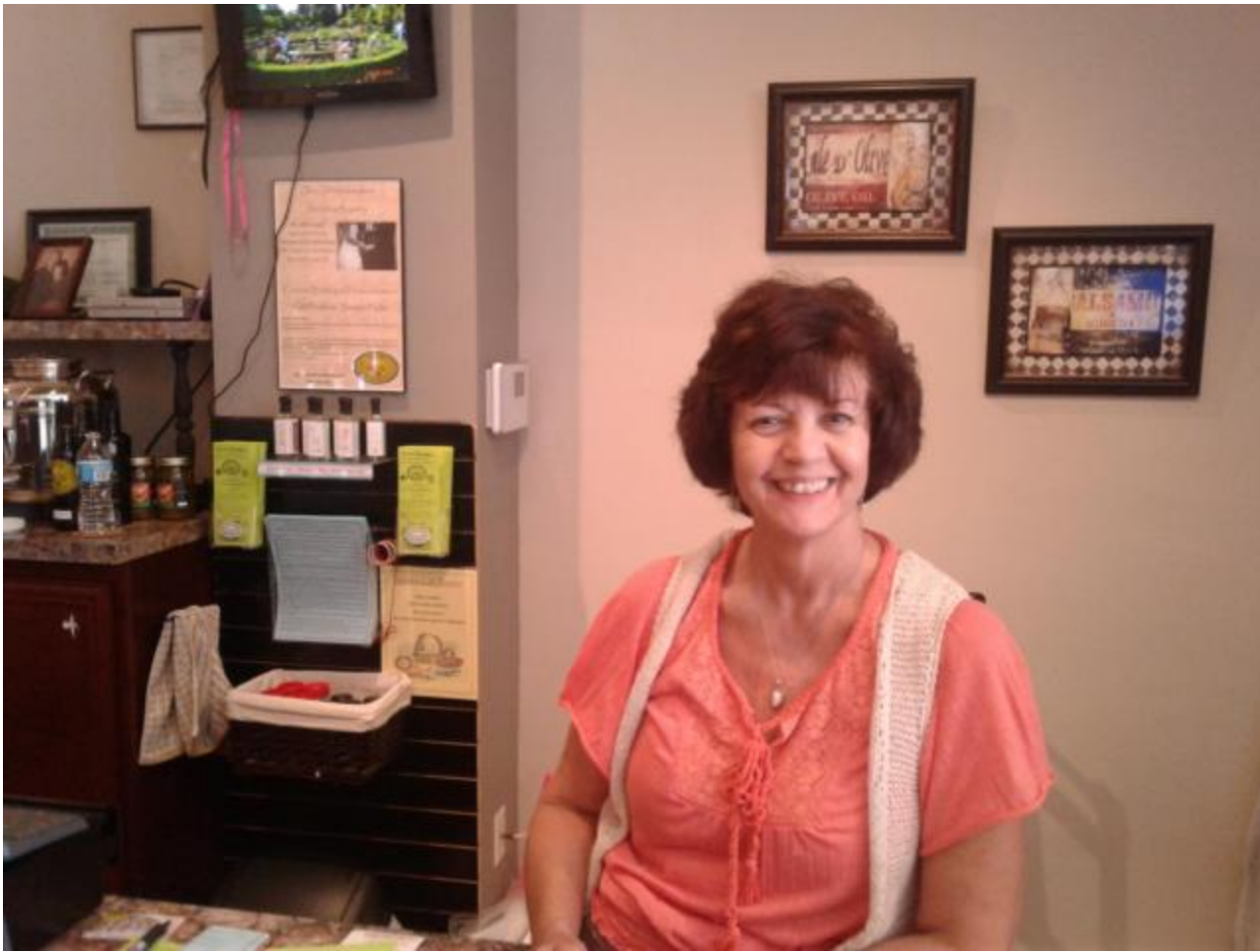


# Olive Oil Marketplace preparing to celebrate half a decade in business

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - The Olive Oil Marketplace, located at 108 Third St. in Alton, has grown a lot since it was founded by Tim and Julie Meeks five years ago.

Julie Meeks said the store has expanded from providing gourmet olive oils and balsamics to all sorts of cooking and grilling spices, rubs, sauces, utensils and other supplies. Recently, the shop has expanded into a second location in Belleville and increased their inventory to cater to grill enthusiasts with their "Get-R-Smoked" line of grilling rubs, spices and wood chips sourced from fruit and nut trees, such as apple, peach and pecan.

"We've really built a good customer base here," Julie Meeks said. "People were very accepting to have us here as a gourmet shop. A lot of people have taken to being more conscientious about what they are eating, and they like to have a good olive oil or balsamic on hand for their cooking needs."

To celebrate half a decade in business, the Olive Oil Marketplace will host a special series of events for its customers, starting with a ribbon cutting with the RiverBend Growth Association (RBGA) at 11 a.m. Friday. That cutting will mark the beginning of a week of fun, festivities and sales.

Many of the locally-sourced vendors who provide goods to the business will be on hand at various times through the week, including Schneider Farms from Herman, which supplies the smoked meat snacks at the Olive Oil Marketplace and Mama Sugos of Vito's on The Hill in St. Louis. Julie Meeks said the Olive Oil Marketplace has recently began stocking marinara sauce from that supplier.

On Friday and Saturday, the Olive Oil Marketplace will be serving pulled pork sandwiches with an extra bit of zest from their homemade barbecue sauce as part of its customer appreciation lunch.

Julie Meeks said several specials will also be offered in the store to celebrate the anniversary at both the Alton and Belleville locations.

More information on the Olive Oil Marketplace can be found at [www.oliveoilmarketplace.com](http://www.oliveoilmarketplace.com).

