

RBGA Small Business of the Month: The Cookie Factory

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ALTON - Since 1979, The Cookie Factory has been a staple of the Alton Square Mall. On Friday morning, it was named the Riverbend Growth Association's (RBGA's) "Small Business of the Month."

"Through good times and bad, ups and downs," the local business led by Linda McCormick has established a great following. McCormick said sales have lowered since the Alton Square Mall branch of the Hayner Public Library moved from across the way to downstairs, and Radio Shack's closure brought another dent to revenue from impulse purchases. However, McCormick said sales are still pretty good, and she is excited to see how the future renovations at the mall will reinvigorate sales for each tenant.

"We're excited about things happening here at the Alton Square, and we're glad to be here," she said. "We're super excited for the area about the changes coming at the mall. This is going to be big."

McCormick recently purchased new signage and installed it on the outside of the mall. The bold white lettering is also illuminated at night, possibly drawing more customers to the Cookie Factory and Bakery.

"Linda (McCormick) is a wonderful supporter of the Alton Square Mall," RBGA Executive Director Monica Bristow said.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker was also in attendance to congratulate the small business. He said the Alton Square Mall was about to undergo sweeping new changes in the near future. He said the demolition of the former Macy's department store was going as scheduled, and even said there was interest in developing the 14 vacant acres that demolition will create.

"There's already interest in developing those 14 acres," Walker said. "We should be starting construction on the rest of the mall after this Christmas shopping season."

Walker thanked McCormick for "sticking it out through the ups and downs," and promised "the best times are coming."

That sentiment was shared by McCormick who said the best times for her business may be yet to come, especially if the multi-million dollar investments being proposed by the mall's current owners, The Hull Group, can reinvigorate the nearly-vacant Alton Square Mall.

Besides cookies, The Cookie Factory serves soups, salads and an assortment of drinks.