

New business fills former void on corner of State and Ninth

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – After being vacant for the better part of five years, a corner store is operating to its fullest on the corner of State and Ninth Street in Alton.

Called State Corner Market, the convenience mart is operated by brothers, Mohammed and Ghassan Mahmood, who have previous experience working at Central Market in Alton. Mohammed Mahmood said he is happy to have made the move to State Street with his brother, adding he would love to soon move from Florissant, Missouri, to Alton. He said the location near his store is “quiet” and “peaceful.” He said that part of Alton seemed like a great place to raise his children.

“We were looking around St. Louis and couldn't find anything we liked,” Ghassan Mahmood said. “We came back around Alton and saw this place was empty, and liked the location.”

Mohammed Mahmood said the brothers were driving through Ninth Street and noticed the building standing vacant. He said he found the owner in Granite City, adding he was willing to sell the place.

Upon taking over, Mohammed Mahmood said they had to repair the cooler's compressor and installed a kitchen. As recently as last week, they added a slushie machine and an impressive ice cream selection – two things children playing at nearby Hellrung Park have been utilizing frequently.

“It's been a high-traffic area,” Mohammed Mahmood said. “People seem pretty excited that there is something in here now. We also have the best food you can get anywhere in Alton.”

Food selection at State Corner Market includes honey-glazed and hot chicken wings, chicken tenders, gyros, Philly cheese steaks, various fish options and even a t-bone steak and salad combo. Mohammed Mahmood said carry-outs were available, and their menu is located on their Facebook page.

When asked about the dynamic between the brothers, Ghassan and Mohammed each said they preferred working with each other, because they had to work alongside someone they could trust with their entire livelihoods and money. After opening in February 2018, they said they could not be any happier with their choice to move to that location and open a business.

One of the most glaring differences between State Corner Market and other similar establishments is the fact State Corner Market does not sell alcohol. In fact, both brother said any plans to sell alcohol were not in the business's future.

“Alcohol is a gold mine, but it comes with too many problems, too much drama,” Mohammed Mahmood said.

While the business is still fledgling, having opened less than six months ago, people were already coming into the place Thursday afternoon and ordering their “usuals.” Mohammed Mahmood, who was working behind the counter, was quick to know what each of his customers wanted already.

He said Alton had changed a lot for the better since he worked at what was formerly known as Central Package Liquors, before it ceased the sale of alcohol. Both brothers worked there nearly a decade ago and said they wanted to continue serving the people of Alton, and wanted a store of their own.