

# **One-Of-A-Kind Mom and Pop Store: Friend Of Schwegel's Says Business Needs Support After Pandemic, Etc.**

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ALTON - The Schwegel family has a long legacy in Alton for its care and concern about the region as a well-recognized mom-and-pop grocery store at 901 Alby Street.

For many Alton neighbors and friends in the community, [Schwegel's](#) has provided their meats, grocery products, and a place to cash checks when no one else would for years and years.

Robert McAfoos, a long-time friend of the Schwegel family and former employee, sent a meaningful letter to Riverbender.com a few days ago about the store and how it has hit some hard times since the COVID-19 Pandemic. It went as follows:

*"Schwegel's Grocery Store at the corner of 9th and Alby has hit very hard times: first, with the COVID-19 Pandemic and now with road/sewer construction that has gravely hindered business. Schwegel's has served this side of town, which has been considered to be a food desert for four generations. They are not your average grocery store. Countless families have come in and filled their grocery carts with food, unable to pay, and received credit from the store simply because it is the right thing to do.*

*"Schwegel's has delivered many loads of groceries to folks who could not get out, long before the pandemic. They are an accessible grocery store to a part of town where not everyone has a car. They have offered good, honest jobs to many people through the years of whom my wife and I are two. Not to mention, they are the first to donate whatever is asked of them for any community event.*

*"If our community is not informed of the trial Schwegel's is undergoing, and does not get behind them in support, it could lose a true gem and be replaced with a liquor store or God knows what."*

*P.S. "While the Schwegel's are very giving, they would never step forward and ask for anything for themselves. Nevertheless, they agreed for me to reach out and spread awareness if it will help save the business."*



Mike and Monica Schwegel are the family members that own the business today. Bud Schwegel, their father, was the previous owner who died in May 2013 and was known for his caring nature and wisdom. Mike and Monica Schwegel [have followed his lead](#) and continue the Schwegel family tradition at 901 Alby St. in Alton.

Monica and Mike were touched that Robert McAfoos would reach out to the public trying to alert them of their situation.

“It was very kind of Robert,” she said. “He used to work here for several years, and he is one of the sweetest, kindest guys you could ever meet.”

Monica and Mike Schwegel have tried to continue their father’s tradition of a family mom-and-pop grocery store.

“I don’t know if it is changing times, but it kind of seems like we have been forgotten by a lot of people,” Monica said. “I don’t know why. I don’t know if it is all the construction around us or if this comes from the pandemic, and now everything is so expensive with gas, food, and more. The people we order groceries from out of Indianapolis said a lot of mom-and-pop businesses shut their doors during the pandemic.

We have been doing this for 90 years, and we enjoy working with the community and the public. We appreciate all the public support we have had over the years. But if we don't get support, we will have to do something drastically different here."

Mike and Monica are two of the hardest workers in the Alton vicinity, putting their time in tirelessly for years and years. Mike often will be found in the meat department, one of Schwegel's strong points, with an apron and a smile on cutting and producing meat products. Monica has been behind the counter for years. The Schwegel's check-cashing business helps keep them afloat now, Monica says, and they are looking at possible video gaming at a part of the store in the future to increase revenue.

Jackie, Theresa, and Bobby are Schwegel's employees treasured by the community who lasted 30 years at the store until their retirement. Monica said many young 16-year-olds started their working careers at Schwegel's and went through college, then moved on to successful careers. The business has impacted boundless amounts of lives in the Riverbend region.

Monica and Mike worry what might locate in their place if something happens to Schwegel's on that corner. The two want to continue their service to the community and keep the store as it is, with the groceries, meat products and check cashing. The Schwegel family wants to keep all their employees in place for their future and continue to have a positive impact on their lives. The duo wants to continue their deliveries to residents, while not that profitable, and still have some "house charges" in place for people who can't afford their groceries on that paycheck. Honestly, do we know any other grocery store that still does that with house charges? Only Schwegel's in Alton continues that tradition left by the former patriarch Bud.

Monica Schwegel, who has the nickname "Baby," told an interesting story about her father, Bud, that she and her brother, Mike, never forgot, and they apply in the business to this day.

"I was talking to dad about deliveries and commented to him that we need to stop doing this as we are not making any money from it. It takes 10 minutes to take down the order, and it takes 30 minutes to put it together and deliver I told him. It is just not worth it. My dad said, 'Baby, these people wouldn't be able to eat if it wasn't for us. It's not about making money, it's about making friends.' He was a wonderful man, my dad."

Now, thanks to Robert alerting everyone, it appears it is time for friends of Schwegel's to take the time to go in and support their family-owned business and keep it in Alton for years to come.

