

NEW ELIZABETH ORCHARD STATION A HIT

ELIZABETH, IL – The donuts live up to their reputation. They are REALLY good!

Dittmar Orchard Station, Elizabeth's newest business, is open at 106 Diagonal Street in Elizabeth, on Highway 20 where it starts the big bend onto Main Street.

And the donuts, which are pumpkin and cider by the way, are just the beginning. There's pumpkin bread, apple cider, four varieties of Elizabeth grown apples and wild flower honey straight from the hives on the Dittmar farm.

Locals and tourists are very supportive of the new shop, and have been stopping by, including groups of motorcycle riders from all over the country. Life must be better with a box of great donuts in your saddle bag!

Peg Dittmar and Jonna Stayner Dittmar are the powers manning the donut machine and everything else in the operation. However the entire extended family that includes aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren and cousins have been involved in Dittmar Farms since established in 1854.

It's quite a story.

Located on the sesquicentennial homestead that was once a traditional dairy farm, this family-oriented attraction started with the Dittmar Farms "Pumpkin Patch", open annually in September and October with corn and hay mazes, pony rides, hayrides, pick-your-own pumpkins and raspberries and a gourd launcher.

The family has developed a playground, a snack bar and a pavilion for munching on the baked goods being sold.

Pumpkin bread and other delicacies were created in a local church kitchen, and last year the "Donut Ladies", as they have become known, realized they needed to upgrade and add a store to their operation. "We began looking around and the closed burger shop location was a natural," said Peg over a donut in the "Station." Peg, by the way, is a full-time nurse practitioner at both of the Midwest Medical Center's clinics in Elizabeth and Galena.

Jonna, a resource teacher for the Scales Mound school district, and Peg realized the Dittmar franchise was primed to grow, and the new store offered an answer from the farm itself.

"Four years ago we began to plant apples and now have 800 trees with room for another 150 trees," Jonna said. "The Orchard Station store is the sales outlet for our apples and is something that is a normal off-spring for orchards in those parts of the country that have larger apple orchard operations."

"We are doing some extensive marketing...radio and print and a billboard, mostly locally, but also some in Chicago, in addition to our website, Facebook and email."

Stop in for a donut, some apple cider, some pumpkin bread, some wild flower honey...and don't forget the apples!

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