

Smokehouse opens doors in Sisters

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

“Our overall goal was not to piece this together but to do it right,” Jeff Johnson, president and CEO of Sisters Meat and Smokehouse told *The Nugget* last week.

They did, in fact, do it right, if the reaction of the Sisters community is any gauge.

Sisters Meat and Smokehouse opened its doors two weeks ago, and the customers came flooding in. Sandwich-makers kept their hands flying to keep up with orders for everything from turkey sandwiches to a spicy cotto salami sandwich, and the smoker and meat-cutter worked long into the night to keep the meat case stocked with fresh cuts of premium meats ranging from beef to lamb, pork, poultry and wild game.

“We carry local if we can find it,” Johnson told *The Nugget*.

Their beef comes from Symon Beef Co. near Madras, and it’s hormone- and antibiotic-free and grass-fed and grain-finished.

“The lamb is from a ranch six miles out of Sisters (Cascade Mountain Pastures),” Johnson noted.

“In Central Oregon, people want to buy local,” he said. Local sourcing also allows the Smokehouse to keep close tabs on quality and purity.

“We have direct access,” Johnson said. “We can put eyes-on.”

Attention to detail is evident in every aspect of the operation, from selection of product to its handling to the temperature of beer glasses and the length of tap hoses dispensing an array of brews.

The opening demonstrated some things that required quick changes, which Johnson and his crew — largely a family affair — have jumped on immediately.

“Our lunch business is far stronger than we expected it to be,” Johnson said.

So the Smokehouse is



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Jeff and Kay Johnson with Wade and Brody Waller are operating Sisters’ new smokehouse and eatery.

converting a drygoods room into a kitchen to move sandwich prep out from behind the counter and create enough space to keep up with the demand.

The family nature of the business is evident throughout the operation. Jeff’s sister-in-law Susie Johnson (wife of Sisters Fire Chief Roger Johnson), did the interior design. The corrugated metal siding evokes her grandfather’s butcher shop and deli, touching upon a family tradition in the trade. Her cousin Brody Waller is the “managing partner and smoked-meat genius,” Jeff says, and Brody’s brother Wade is the expert meat-cutter. Jeff’s wife, Kay, is co-owner of the business, and other family-members are also involved.

Family history is what led to the creation of Sisters Meat and Smokehouse. Jeff recalled that Brody would put together holiday gift baskets with meat recipes that bowled family and friends over. The quality got Jeff’s business-oriented mind going.

For Jeff and Kay to open a smokehouse in their hometown might, on the surface, seem like an unusual career move. After all, Jeff’s professional acquaintanceship with “smoking” comes from an entirely different direction: He is a retired fire chief and is CEO of the Western Fire Chiefs Association. Yet that background comes into play at Sisters Meat and

Smokehouse.

“My specialty is building a service culture,” he told *The Nugget*. “That’s my contribution here.”

There is a deep sense of pride in craftsmanship associated with the selections Sisters Meat and Smokehouse offers to the Sisters public.

“The cheeses are ours and we smoke ’em,” Jeff Johnson said. “The meats are ours and we smoke ’em. So you get a very special product you can’t get anywhere else.”

Sisters Meat and Smokehouse is located at 110 S. Spruce St. For more information call 541-719-1186 or visit www.sistersmeat.com.

Sisters woman honored for volunteer work

Weibi Marcoux has been named the Council on Aging’s August Volunteer of the Month.

She has been coming to the Sisters Senior Luncheon since shortly after it began, regularly helping to set up the tables in the morning and greeting everyone at


the front table. She’s always upbeat and participates in as many activities as she can — senior stretches, outings to visit other lunch sites, Park and Rec field trips, etc.

Marcoux was presented with her plaque at the Sisters luncheon luau celebration.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Weibi Marcoux, right, is a regular at the Sisters Senior Luncheon.



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