

# Business & Ag

## D&J Taco Shop has a successful opening week

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A little over a week ago David Kassien and Jamie Ostrander opened what they expected to be a successful business: D&J Taco Shop.

The shop, with an anchor theme for personal reasons, is unlike any other in town and based on the idea of fresh, fast and friendly—that is their motto; it's even printed on their business cards.

They both were shocked at the reception they received.

"That first day, people were lined up out the door and down the sidewalk," they said. "It's flattering."

It has been a steady stream ever since with some customers.

"They come back sometimes two times a day, then the next day and the next day. It is kind of crazy the amount of people we've had come through this building. We were a little worried opening up in January in Baker City. We had heard all these horror stories of not making it and not having people come in, that there is nobody in town who will eat, and we gotta tell you we've been wondering 'Are they anywhere else in town, is anyone else getting any business?' We've exceeded our goals, we expected to be busy but not like it's been," Kassien said.

Kassien explained that extra pans for more back-up had to be ordered to meet demand. He said, "So we're not scrambling to keep up. Our food order, our meats are kind of specialty meats, already marinated and prepared by chefs. I mean if we wanted to use raw meat we could get that all day long, but the specialty meats are a different story. Our food rep had to get in touch with his suppliers to up what we are getting, too. We used up the all of the shredded beef and I had my own recipe so I whipped it up and we decided we liked it a little bit better so, we are using that. Once it settles down we will have a better even flow. Everybody knows though, when you start a business it takes up all your time. You've got to work at it."

After being open for over a week now and knowing what to expect, the employees at D&J Taco Shop are getting a routine down. Knowing what needs to be done and Kassien and Ostrander have been teaching them their ways how to prepare certain items, thus relieving the load on them some, and they are training employees on closing procedures in hopes they won't have to be there all the hours of operation.

Kassien and Ostrander did work with Economic Development and The Chamber of Commerce as well and said, "Everyone should join the Chamber and support local business."

Ostrander stated, "Since we've started this venture we've tried to keep as much local as we can. Signs, T-shirts, Contractors. We are firm believers in 'if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.' We'll go to them and give



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

L-R Jamie Ostrander and David Kassien opened their new taco restaurant in the Baker Tower last week.

them our business. They'll come to ours and give us their business. We have seen everyone we've gone through for services come in for food."

Kassien added, "We've gotten gifts from other business owners. We have gotten an overwhelming response from the community."

It was however, friends they made while cooking for the VFW that made this dream a reality.

Kassien and Ostrander developed a following among the local veteran community and were urged to begin this venture.

They have high regards for veterans and consider many close friends.

When funding seemed an impossible hurdle to put this dream together, a couple of the friends they had made at the local VFW agreed to loan them the money to turn the business into a reality.

"We are veteran backed," they said proudly.

Kassien and Ostrander are both relatively new to Baker City, only settling here within the last few years.

Kassien is originally from Southern California and Ostrander is from upstate New York.

They worked for the local Dairy Queen (with two stores in the local area they managed) for a period of time before embarking on this adventure together.

Kassien has a background in the cable industry, which he worked in for 20 years beginning in the 80s, owned a pet grooming business, worked for Lowes—working his way up to an administrative manager—and was a General Manager at Taco Bell.

Ostrander brings to the table an extensive background in the food service industry working with Darden Restaurants for eight years at Olive Garden.

He then worked with TGI Friday's for 11 years and Buffalo Wild Wings for three years. He then became a General Manager for Salsarita's Fresh Cantinas for four years before buying the franchise and owning it for another five years.

He has a degree in Business Administration and Management.

Kassien and Ostrander are very customer service driven. They say they believe if one treats people well and produces a good

product—they cook and prepare all food fresh daily, make fresh salsa daily and fry tortillas fresh to order—customers are going to come back.

Due to that freshness element, Ostrander said, "That's why we haven't done fish yet, but we are going to pick a day to do fish taco; it's just that with fish you have to serve it fresh and that does offer some challenges."

They also want customers to know they do listen and try to adapt to satisfy them in fact they went out and bought olives for one customer and have since discovered it is a big item a lot of customers want. So now, they stock olives.

They also want to let customers know they do have plans to add Tortas (a Mexican sub sandwich) and an anchor wrap, similar to the Taco Bell crunch wrap.

Aside from keeping customers happy, they also believe in paying their staff a little higher wage to obtain and retain employees who are going to promote and maintain the values that are important to them.

Currently the business open 11:00 a.m. till 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday in the lobby of the Baker Tower located at 1705 Main Street. They employ five.

Ostrander said, "We felt this was a good location. We've lived here long enough to know there really isn't anything on this end of town to capture business."

"There are a lot of businesses down here, too. Hearts and Petals just opened. Mad Habit is doing a huge remodel. Bearded Dog just opened around the corner. City Hall, the Federal Building—there

are a lot of people with nowhere to go on this side of town to eat so we saw that as an opportunity. And we are right on the way out of town to Sumpter."

Ostrander also indicated he would like to look into how to get a sign on the interstate that may bring people into town.

"Once spring and summer start to hit and we see an increase in foot traffic and tourists walking up and down the street we have no problem staying open later," Ostrander said. Kassien added, "We're applying for a permit so in the summer we can have outside seating and we are in the process of applying for a beer and wine license so we are hoping to be able to add that soon. We'll react to the public needs."

The two also expressed interest in a future expansion that may include the current ballroom of the Baker Tower to add seating and possibly a lounge type area.

"We just wanted to give Baker City someplace different, new and kind of hip to go hang out."

A grand opening and ribbon-cutting\* are planned soon.

*\* Two newly opened Baker City businesses will celebrate their Grand Openings this Friday, February 5th:*

*Hearts & Petals Flower Shoppe, owned by Denise Harmon and located at 1788 Main Street, will have their ribbon-cutting at 2:00 p.m.*

*D&J Taco Shop, owned by David Kassien and Jamie Ostrander, is located at 1705 Main Street. Their ribbon cutting is scheduled for 3:00 p.m.*

### — WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, January 29, 2016 — Eastern Oregon  
Prices trended generally steady compared to week-ago prices. The recent cold snap has increased sales. Many producers have decided to hold on to their hay for now, in hopes for higher prices. Snow has hit some of the hay producing areas. Many hay producers are sold out for the year. All prices are in dollars per ton and FOB unless otherwise stated. This week was difficult to get hold of hay producers, so it is a limited test.

No new sales this week. Last week's were:

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa —Large Square Good		
250	135.00-135.00	135.00
Alfalfa / Orchard Mix —Small Square Premium		
35	190.00-190.00	190.00
Prairie Grass—Small Square Good		
25	150.00-150.00	150.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

### — CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, January 27, 2016  
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1497

#### Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 179.00 - 219.00	Top 224.00
400-500#	Bulk 176.00 - 219.75	Top 220.50
500-600#	Bulk 173.00 - 193.00	Top 197.50

#### Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk 173.00 - 199.00	Top 202.00
400-500#	Bulk 159.00 - 194.00	Top 194.50
500-600#	Bulk 146.00 - 168.00	Top 168.50

#### Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 152.00 - 172.00	Top 173.25
700-800#	Bulk 139.00 - 151.00	Top 154.50
800-900#	Bulk 136.00 - 144.60	Top 145.00
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

#### Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 138.00 - 162.00	Top 162.50
700-800#	Bulk 127.00 - 145.00	Top 148.00
800-900#	Bulk 112.00 - 133.00	Top 134.00
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	42.00 - 51.00
Butcher Cows	51.00 - 61.00
Butcher Bulls	52.00 - 68.00
Stock Cows Yng.	1125.00 - 1575.00
Younger Hfrts.	84.00 - 120.00
Stock Cows Older.	785.00 - 1100.00

ProducersLivestock.com  
541-473-3136

### — LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Currently the local log market is flooded with fire salvage logs. The log buyer for Malheur Lumber Co. stated they have all the logs they need under contract and are not accepting any new purchases. BCC/LLC of La Grande has receive so many burned fire salvage logs they are no longer accepting logs at the La Grande log yard. Any additional pine logs have to be delivered to the Elgin Log yard cut in plywood lengths and to a 8 inch top. For these pine logs cut in plywood lengths, BCC is offering \$280.00/mbf. They are also paying \$410.00/mbf for Doug Fir & Western Larch. For White Fir they are offering \$310.00/mbf. At the Pilot Rock Saw Mill BCC is offering \$360.00/mbf for a 12 to 15 inch top, for 16 to 19 inch top \$400.00/mbf & offering \$425.00/mbf for 20 inch plus top

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,  
Andersen Forestry Consulting

### — PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: 1,039.70

Silver: \$14.66

Platinum: \$879.70

Palladium: \$510.32

Bloomberg.com

### — AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$371.00/bu/USD

Wheat: \$480.00/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$876.75/bu/USD

Oats: \$196.25 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$11.14/cwt/USD

Canola: \$471.90 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$136.05/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$158.18/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$69.83/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

Take out a Valentine's Day  
greeting for the one  
you love!

Just \$5 per heart. Greetings will run next week. Email news@thebakercountynews.com with exact message, name and address. You'll receive an invoice via email. Click to pay and your ad will be scheduled. It's just that easy!

