

Local News

Feast set to feed crowds with new restaurant

BY TIM TRAINOR

Redmond Spokesman

A new restaurant has opened in Redmond, though you may have already seen its proprietors slinging food from their mobile kitchen, which has operated for years in the city.

Emma and Chris Leyden, previously of Feast Food Company truck, have traded up to a bigger space — albeit with fewer wheels. The new restaurant, which can seat 80 people inside and nearly as many outside, is located at 546 NW 7th Street. It will go by the same name, Feast Food Company.

Its new location, a former home built in the 1940s, was renovated into a restaurant space in 2002. It housed the former Smith Rock Brewing and Vine-N-Tap, among other eateries.

"I think we're the fourth restaurant to operate out of here and we hope to be the last," said Emma.

The Leydens — originally from Nebraska and Kansas, respectively — cut their chops in the restaurant game at the famed Husk Restaurant in Charleston, S.C., which specializes in Southern cuisine. They moved to Central Oregon a decade ago and for years Chris ran the kitchen at downtown Bend's upscale restaurant 900 Wall. Emma specializes in front-of-house duties, though while operating out of the mobile kitchen she learned line cook skills as well.

"That was super valuable for me," she said.

Feast has long supported local agriculture, buying from a number of local farms and ranches with the help of the High Desert Food and Farm Alliance. The HDEFFA works to connect consumers and restaurants with local growers in order to support small farms.

Katrina Van Dis, executive director of the HDEFFA, said she is excited that Feast is expanding its presence in Redmond. She said the restaurant, and the Leydens, are showing how the locavore movement isn't just for big-city foodies.

"It should be normal, right?" she said. "Feast is a perfect example of a comfortable environment and affordable food that has a local connection. I like that Feast is making that available to everyday people."

The restaurant is currently open Thursday through Monday from 3-9 p.m. and Sunday from 3-8 p.m. The Leydens said they hope to gradually expand their hours, adding weekend brunch first, then hoping to open for lunch throughout the week.

Its menu ranges from a \$12 fried mushroom appetizer to a \$15 cheeseburger, a \$26 short rib pappardelle and a \$12 funnel cake for dessert. Happy hour includes affordable options, including raw oysters at \$2.25 each or a \$6 order of french fries. Feast has a full bar with specialty cocktails, as well as numerous beer and wine options.

■ Reporter: ttrainor@redmondspokesman.com



Tim Trainor/Spokesman

Emma and Chris Leyden, owners of Feast Food Co., have traded up from their food truck to a new brick-and-mortar location.

Deschutes County representatives fill House Republican leadership roles

BY TIM TRAINOR

Redmond Spokesman

The Oregon House Republican Caucus recently elected its leadership for the 82nd legislative session, which will get underway Jan. 9 in Salem.



Breese-Iverson

The caucus re-elected Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson (R-Prineville), whose district includes north Redmond, to serve as the House Republican Leader. Representative Breese-Iverson has been serving as a state legislator since 2019 and was first elected to serve as the House Republican Leader in 2021.

Representative Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany) was elected as the deputy House Republican Leader, and Representative E. Werner Reschke (R-Klamath Falls) was elected to serve as the House Republican Whip. Reschke's district extends into southern Deschutes County.

"I look forward to continuing to serve alongside my friends and colleagues in this role," said Breese-Iverson in a release. "We will continue to fight for much-needed balance. House Republicans will not stop pushing for solutions that focus on the most critical needs of Oregonians."

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FACES OF HOMELESSNESS | REDMOND

Man living amid the junipers still has hopes and dreams

BY JOE SIESS

CO Media Group

Navigating to Mark Pitzer's campsite on a rugged stretch of forest land east of Redmond requires a vehicle with four-wheel drive and an exceptional sense of the territory.

Pitzer, 55, has lived in the area known by residents as "The Junipers" for four years, only making the meandering trip to town to get supplies when necessary. He lives alone in a motorhome with his 3-year-old cat, Iddy, and that's how he prefers it. It's a solitary life, and not everyone has what it takes to survive out there. But Pitzer is resilient and makes it work.

"I'd stay out here the whole month if I didn't have to (go to town)," Pitzer said. "I just don't like people. I think people are mean. I think they are getting meaner by the day."

Pitzer started living in the forest after a debilitating mountain biking injury in 2009 rendered him disabled. Because he could no longer work, he left his job as the head meat cutter at Cinder Butte Meat Co. in Redmond.

The accident broke his neck and his skull in five places, which over time, developed into a form of degenerative nerve disease. Today, his body is in constant pain, and he finds it difficult to fall asleep at night.

"I messed myself up pretty good," Pitzer said.

After leaving his job, he



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Mark Pitzer in the camp where he lives outside of Redmond.



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Mark Pitzer in the camp where he lives outside of Redmond.

started his own hauling business. But when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, his life took a turn for the worse.

"It never did get better for me," Pitzer said. "And I tried."

Pitzer used his stimulus

"I pretty much lost it all, and this is where I've ended up, and with no way out, once you don't have a good income. Just on my disability. I barely get by."

— Mark Pitzer

checks to keep his business going, using the money to buy equipment and vehicles. Eventually, he had to sell his trailers and a truck to keep afloat. Things got increasingly difficult for Pitzer, who routinely sought odd jobs. Eventually, as the world settled into lockdowns, those opportunities dried up as well.

Now, he lives in his motor-

home parked at his campsite near Redmond. He said his only income source is his Social Security check, which is automatically wired into his account each month. While he only scrapes by, he is unable to access other forms of assistance because he makes just enough to not qualify, he said.

"I pretty much lost it all, and this is where I've ended up, and

with no way out, once you don't have a good income," Pitzer said. "Just on my disability. I barely get by."

Pitzer, who was born and raised on a farm in Albany, is uniquely equipped to handle the rough lifestyle he lives, he said. Growing up hunting, fishing and camping prepared him to live in a way that most people could not handle.

"Luckily, I did know some stuff because there are some people out here who don't," Pitzer said. "I like it for the freedom. And the peace and quiet. But the rest of it I really don't, there's a lot out here."

He said his disability along with his getting older, has him thinking of getting out of the junipers and moving into town.

He said it is simply not safe anymore, as people routinely drive through the area and harass residents like himself.

Despite his difficult circumstance, Pitzer still dreams of a brighter future, even honing his skills as a salesman with hopes of eventually getting into the field. He also pictures himself living out in the country someday where he can build a small house with a couple of bedrooms. His plan is to hand that home down to his children.

"I got to leave them something when I go. I don't want to leave them nothing. Because that is what they think of me anyways, and I want to prove that wrong," Pitzer said. "I have goals, see? It's amazing that I still have them."

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