

Eateries added to offerings at the Depot

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — The historic Depot, long a site popular for travelers' lodging, has added food to its offerings with the advent of Bennies Baggies and Z's BBQ at the site along Highway 82 between Enterprise and Joseph.

Housed in the 1908 building that once was the railroad depot in Enterprise along the tracks near where Wallowa County Grain Growers now stands, it was moved in the 1980s to its current site. Purchased four years ago by Leita Barlow and her daughters, Amy and Autumn Roseberry, the daughters have been joined in the business ventures by their boyfriends, Ben Ludwigson and Daniel Zieman, respectively.

True to form for most successful businesses, they saw a need and found a way to meet it. Both eateries opened Thursday, June 17.

"The idea came from we've got a lot of Airbnb guests and people coming through this area and they were always asking us where they could get lunch for the day before they go on the Railriders or they go hiking or whatever," Ludwigson said. "So we got a big commercial fridge, which sparked this idea of preparing healthy, bagged lunches that would be filling and would travel well and people could put the stuff in their backpack and bring with them to



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Autumn Roseberry shows one of the trays meals are served on at Z's BBQ on Wednesday, June 23, 2021. Z's is located at the Depot between Enterprise and Joseph.

have a good lunch."

Located in the lobby of the Depot, it's long offered premium coffee to guests.

"When Red Horse Coffee went out of business a couple years ago, we went down there ... and bought a bunch of their equipment with plans of maybe trying to do some kind of restaurant in the future," he said.

Well, the future has arrived and now the restaurant also fills hungry stomachs at breakfast.

"I'm a self-proclaimed breakfast burrito aficionado and burrito connoisseur," he said.

"Last fall, we opened just with coffee. We didn't have our food license for the certification set up yet,"

Ludwigson said. "Over the winter, we added more equipment and got the health certification (from the state.) So now we're serving really delicious breakfast burritos. We got permission from Mike and Kathy (Leo) from the old Red Horse to use their Red Horse breakfast burrito recipe."

Ludwigson emphasized the variety of his menu. He and Amy Roseberry serve three different burritos, four lunch entrées that are either wraps or sandwiches, as well as muffins, cookies and other items. He said much of the food is organic, but he's been unable to find organic ingredients for all the menu.

BENNIES BAGGIES

When: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday through Sunday
Where: 83490 Joseph Highway, Joseph
Phone: 541-304-5289
Email: BenniesBaggies@gmail.com
Online: BenniesBaggies.com

Z'S BBQ

When: 4 p.m. to when they're sold out.
Where: 83490 Joseph Highway, Joseph
Phone: 612-219-2717
Email: Zbbqtruck@gmail.com
Online: Facebook.com/zsBBQ
Instagram: @zsbqq

"I guess our deal is making food that's healthy and natural and good for humans and good for the earth," he said. "We try to use natural meats, natural ingredients, no GMOs — and, it tastes fantastic."

Barbecue perfection

Meanwhile, Zieman was perfecting his barbecue. "This is his first crack at doing barbecue, but he took months of perfecting it," Ludwigson said. "I don't know how many

times we got to sit back and enjoy the 12-hour-smoked, delicious barbecue just being test subjects. It was awesome. He really dialed it in."

Zieman does more than the usual ribs, but all offerings are for a healthy appetite.

"Rather than sandwiches — we might throw some specials on every now and then, but the idea behind it is a family-style meal or if you want a nice, big meal for yourself," Zieman said. "We spend all day smoking the meats. Then, when we serve it, you and another person can come get a nice plate of it. You can get the pulled pork, you can get the ribs, you can get brisket, your sides and get a couple plates full."

It's served on trays lined with butcher paper with a variety of barbecue sauces and sides, Autumn Roseberry said.

"We've got a few different size options," she said.

Zieman smokes his meats on a carefully controlled fire outside their service truck. He uses

a mixture of oak and cherry wood.

"The oak is for the heavy smoke and the cherry adds a little sweetness to it," he said. "The cherry burns a little faster and the oak burns slower and longer. It's a combination of both that way."

Of course, eating barbecue can be a messy proposition, and Z's BBQ takes that into account.

"We've got plenty of napkins and wet naps around here," Zieman said.

Roseberry said that she and Zieman just moved back to Wallowa County a couple months ago.

"We're going to make this more of a permanent location," she said.

But the truck, itself, is mobile.

"The plan is to be able to (travel), but right now we're just getting established here," Zieman said.

In August, they plan to be at the Main Street Show 'n' Shine in Enterprise and they have a couple weddings scheduled to cater.

"The plan is to be more mobile, but it's nice to have a place that people can find us all the time," he said.

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