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Butcher, baker, candy maker all leading downtown Lombard back

By Anna Madrzyk | Daily Herald Staff

Contact writer



Sweet Street Candies and Goodies is one of three businesses that have reopened in downtown Lombard.

BEV HORNE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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PRINT E-MAIL STORY

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Downtown Lombard is coming back to life.

The bakery, candy store and cafe - all closed for a while - are back. A new butcher shop is open, and a women's clothing store is on the way.

Two other businesses have expanded, and one or more new restaurants - Greek, Mexican or Irish - might be headed here, too.

"It's a very exciting time for our downtown area," said Village President William J. Mueller.

Lombard's retail situation has been a mixed bag. Yorktown Shopping Center and the surrounding area on the south side of town has enjoyed a renaissance. But downtown has been a source of concern.

To combat the latter, the village and Lombard Town Centre - a community-based organization of residents, businesses, building owners and nonprofits - work jointly to revitalize downtown Lombard.

The village offers several different types of economic development grants designed to lure businesses back into the downtown area. Just Tuesday, the village board approved a grant of up to \$7,400 for Just Be Boutique, a store opening next month. Other grants are in the pipeline or business owners plan soon to apply for them.

And, despite the uncertain economy, the new or returning business people are as upbeat about their prospects for success as one could imagine.

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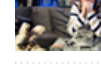
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"The bakery lives again!" said Jeff Klug, new owner of Lilac Bakery, 348 S. Main Street, who is bringing back many of the same recipes enjoyed by generations of Lombard residents. The bakery was closed for two years.

Sweet Street Candies and Goodies, 17 W. St. Charles Road, reopened a few weeks ago with a brightly colored, polka-dotted interior and new owners. Kids are back to stopping in after school for Swedish Fish and Pop Rocks.

"It brings a lot of energy and happiness back to the town," said co-owner Tony DiGiulio.

And Cafe 101 at St. Charles Road and Park Avenue is once again serving coffee and pastries to commuters after being shuttered for a year and half.

Here's a closer look at what's new, what's back and what's on the way:

• Just Be Boutique, 100 W. St. Charles Road, opens June 5. The store will sell upscale clothing and accessories for women and teenage girls and rent designer evening gowns, handbags and jewelry.

• Clancy's Corner Butcher Shoppe, 15 S. Park St., is an old-fashioned butcher shop selling choice and prime meats, plus a selection of "value-added" items such as grill-ready kebabs and marinated and stuffed chicken breasts. The store also makes all its own sausage and does pig roasts.

The grand opening was last month, and business so far is "fantastic," said Jim Wolski, one of the owners. "The people are coming, and coming back over and over again."

• Sweet Street is the place to go for nickel candy, wax lips, Green River soda and sarsaparilla. The new owners have added popcorn and nachos to the mix, and cater to adult palates with fresh fudge and Door County chocolates. Gift baskets and goodie bags are another specialty.

The candy store had been open for seven years when the owner decided to close it to pursue other interests. Tony and Carla DiGiulio read about it, and decided to buy it.

"We wanted to keep the dream alive," Tony DiGiulio said.

• Lilac Bakery reopened under new ownership on, appropriately enough, Fat Tuesday. Customers can once again find the square custard-pecan coffee cake, a specialty for the past 60 years. "People remember that coffee cake," Klug said.

• Feel Good Hair and Spa moved to roomier digs at 1 N. Main Street in March and opened a full day spa. The salon now offers massage therapy, facials, skin care and expanded nail services and carries a full line of Aveda products.

• Sky Centers Martial Arts, which relocated to 112-114 St. Charles Road, is having its grand opening May 15.

On the food front, Capone's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria, 105 W. St. Charles Road, opened in October. And Praga Bon Ton Restaurant, 229 W. St. Charles Road, a martini and wine bar, recently expanded its outdoor seating, adding new lights on the trees and investing in new patio furniture. Also, Lombard Town Centre officials are talking with people interested in opening Greek and Mexican restaurants and an Irish pub.

Mueller said he is getting "good vibes" from other communities about what's going on in downtown Lombard. Now, he says, "the most important thing is once we starting getting businesses in, as we are doing, is for residents of Lombard to shop downtown Lombard."

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