Postville didn't stop, look back

Jim Offner
Postville kosher market reaches out to other customers

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POSTVILLE — Aaron Goldsmith has closed the Postville Drugstore, even though it was built just a few years ago.

When Goldsmith, a 40-year-old former state trooper looking for a change of pace, opened the store in 2008, he envisioned a thriving business that would serve the tiny community of Postville, which has a population of around 2,000.

But as he turns 40, Goldsmith also has his hands full with a new business venture: a company that makes custom hospital beds.

Goldsmith, who often uses the phrase "we're in the center of the country," said the store was a "little bit of everything." He sold everything from spices to shoes, and customers would often stop by to talk about the town and its history.

But when the Agriprocessors kosher meatpacking plant was raided in May 2008, many of the town's residents lost their jobs and the store's business suffered.

"It was tough," Goldsmith said. "Most of our customers worked at the plant and they were upset with what happened." 

The raid forced many of the town's residents to leave, and Goldsmith said he had to let go of several employees.

He said he was able to move on by focusing on his new business, which he started a few years ago.

"I was able to use all my back- ground and skills to build bridges and promote the positive qualities that continue to exist and thrive in Postville," he said.

Goldsmith said he still fills the ambassador's position, if unofficial- ly. But now, he said, he's just a simple entrepreneur.

"We're kind of Iowa's secret spe- cialty hardware store," he said.

Goldsmith also served on Postville's village council for a time, until "we got too big for the market," he said.

But he said Goldsmith had come a long way since he opened the store.

"Aaron Goldsmith is a very impressive," he said. "It's our own little Superman." 

Goldsmith also has built numerous custom beds for returning military veterans who had sustained injuries in the war.

"Goldsmith's said.

"In the last few years, we've seen a rise in the number of elderly people in the Postville community since his store opened," he said.

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