

5-12-2013

Postville's kosher market reaches out to other customers

Jim Offner

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/postville_documents



Part of the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Offner, Jim, "Postville's kosher market reaches out to other customers" (2013). *Postville Project Documents*. 318.

https://scholarworks.uni.edu/postville_documents/318

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the Postville Project at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Postville Project Documents by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

Postville's kosher market reaches out to other customers

By JIM OFFNER

jim.offner@wfcourier.com

POSTVILLE – There are several big-box retail stores within a 20-mile drive of Postville, yet shoppers continue to stream to Glatt Market on Lawler Street.

A glance around the market, which Tzvi Bass opened in a century-old storefront three years ago to cater to Postville's rebounding Orthodox Jewish – and, to some degree, its nascent Somali – population, suggests a Walmart in microcosm.

Glatt is a grocery store that offers a full line of kosher foods, but there also are sections featuring hardware items, cleaners, even some furnishings.

Bass also recently opened a new dairy store in the back of the building.

Bass said he opened the store to replace Jacob's Table, a kosher store down the street that closed in the fallout of the May 2008 raid at the Agriprocessors kosher meatpacking plant and the company's subsequent bankruptcy.

Agriprocessors' collapse cut the town's population of about 120 Jewish families by more than half, Bass said.

"Now, there's only 55 or so, but there's more families moving in," he said.

Bass is a businessman, though,



MATTHEW PUTNEY / Courier Photo Editor

Nadia Babiy checks out costumers at Glatt Market in Postville.

and he tries to cater to a variety of customers, he said.

"I see more than Jewish people come in to shop," he said. "People are finding something unique they like."

Postville's new Somali population, which came to town when the meatpacking plant reopened under new ownership and the Agri Star Meat & Poultry LLC banner, frequent the market as well,

buying spices, canned beans and kosher meats – which meet their Islamic dietary standards – and other goods, Bass said.

See **MARKET**, page D2

MARKET

Kosher grocery fills many needs in local community

From page D1

"We're also getting customers from all around, from Waukon, from Decorah," he said.

The market's success is a reflection of a business community making a comeback, five years after federal agents raided the Agriprocessors plant and arrested 389 undocumented workers and, for a time, turned Postville into a near-ghost town, according to the description of some local residents.

"I can definitely say I see

more shopping going," Bass said. "I don't know the percentage, but I can see more shopping going on."

Aaron Goldsmith, a rabbi and former member of Postville's city council, as well as owner of local hospital bed manufacturer Transfer Master Products Inc., said Glatt Market serves the community in at least two major areas.

"One, it's a livelihood because most of our people serve and work in the kosher plant," Goldsmith said. "The Glatt kosher standard is a high standard of kosher processed foods."

That gets at the second major function the market performs, Goldsmith said.

"In the Orthodox Jewish world, religion is more than just going to services; it's also the way you behave and the way you eat," Goldsmith said. "Every person that's committed to meeting the full obligations of an Orthodox Jew will inherently want to know the meat process is done according to Jewish law and all health laws. They want a good product. It's an interesting idea that's a little bit foreign to the culture at large, that you can get close to the Creator by what you eat and how you behave."

The market has served as a bellwether for businesses in town, said Tony Gericke, president of the Postville

Chamber of Commerce who grew up in Postville and moved back to open a law practice after having been in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area for years.

"He's done a nice job there," Gericke said. "It's really nice inside. He's got a nice display above the windows."

The market doesn't fill everybody's needs, but it serves a strong purpose, Gericke said.

"A lot of people go to Prairie du Chien (Wis.) and Decorah," he said. "If you're looking for books and magazines and looking to pick up your bulk paper towels, that's where you'd go."