

Kelly's labor of love

Kelly's Food Stand opened in July

By PHIL MONSON

On a recent sun-splashed summer day, Kelly Potratz was inside her foodstand, quickly dishing up meals for a small line of people waiting outside.

Potratz has only been open for two months but has already developed a clientele.

"I love to cook," said Potratz, whose foodstand is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Her business, Kelly's Food Stand, is located at the corner of Highway 169 and Wildcat Road, on the same location as her husband's business, Dean's Used Cars.

Kelly and Dean Potratz have been married three years. She's been in Iowa for five years. She was born and raised in Kansas City, KS.

"It's been nice to be able to do this. Business is picking up. There was a time when I would get upset if no one would show up. Some days would be good and some days wouldn't be so good. Some of those days were very, very hot and nobody wants to sit outside in the heat and eat," Potratz said.

"Everything I make can be a carryout item as I have containers for everything," Potratz said.

"We first started serving food at Hundertmark's Auction and we've been doing that for a while. We were just doing loose meat sandwiches and hot dogs. Then we decided to expand so I started doing Kelly's Burgers," Potratz said. "I make what I call a 'Kelly Burger.' It's a different type of burger that's not fried, it's steamed. They're delicious."

"You eliminate the grease preparing it this way and the flavor stays with it. It is so much better," Potratz said.

"I make brats, hot dogs and loose meat sandwiches. And of course, the Kelly Burger. When winter comes, we're going to keep this going and I'm going to add some soups, like tomato soup, chili, roast, potatoes and carrots. I want to stay open all year long," Potratz said.

"In wintertime when it's cold, people can come and pick up their sandwiches or their soups and take them home to eat," Potratz said.

"If anybody wants to, they can even call me and let me know what time they want to be here to pick up their order. They can drive right through here and pick it up," Potratz said.

"I'm happy to make it convenient for the customer," Potratz said.

"This is something I love doing. My kids say that I show my love through food. They've always said that. I'm always wanting to feed them," Potratz said. "Between Dean and I, we have five daughters and 15 grandkids. There's a lot of cooking that goes on whenever they visit."

"I love to cook and I enjoy feeding them when they visit," Potratz said.

"I'm not a very good baker, but I'm learning," Potratz said.

Potratz admits the highway located just yards away has its pitfalls, but overall, the positive outweighs any nega-



Kelly Potratz is now serving from her foodstand, Kelly Burgers, on the corner of Highway 169 and Wildcat Road, in Humboldt.

tives.

"The location has its benefits and challenges. The benefits are Dean has a lot of customers stop by because of his business, Dean's Auto Sales. On the other hand, this is a noisy place, probably the noisiest place in Humboldt. It's a main highway and there's a lot of semi-trucks that come through here. They are very, very loud," Potratz said.

"Sometimes people don't know where to park, but there's space in back of the shop and on the side next to the street. Sometimes there's space right up here by the food stand," Potratz said.

"I've had good feedback since I started selling meals to the public," Potratz said.

"I've only been doing this for two months up here every day. Whenever we are at the auctions and when we started selling the burgers, people were just lining up to get the burgers. I saw the line and I said to myself, 'oh yes, this is what I want to do. This is happening,'" Potratz said.

"I'm excited to see it improve even more. It's a quick and inexpensive meal. Burgers are \$5 and hot dogs are \$4. Loose meat sandwiches are \$5. It's very reasonable," Potratz said.

"I don't have overhead here. This is paid for and Dean supplies me with the electricity. We also sell kettle Korn.



Kelly Potratz is shown here working in her foodstand on a recent summer day.

I'm strictly Monday through Friday. We do the auctions on weekends and whatever else is going on in the community in terms of special events and holidays," Potratz said.

"I keep pretty busy. But I can never keep up with Dean. He never stops working," Potratz said.

"It's been nice. It's been nice. Now, I have left here a few days crying when only two people showed up on those really hot days. People don't necessarily want hot food on hot days," Potratz said.

"I love everything about cooking. I love taking the time to do all the cutting and slicing. And I make sure I only sell the best hot dogs. It's a labor of love. Always," Potratz said.

"Dean is a workaholic. He's a guy that can keep going and



Kelly Potratz is shown here serving a customer at her new business in Humboldt, Kelly's Food Stand, on the location of Dean's Auto Sales in Humboldt.

going," Potratz said. "In the summertime he's up working from the time the sun is up until when it goes down. Me, I can't do it that long. I can't take the heat and so the summer is not my best time."

Potratz likes the slower pace of life in Humboldt.

"I worked at General Motors and Harley-Davidson in Kansas City. The money was great but it takes a toll on your body. I've had both of my shoulders replaced. I'll detail some cars for Dean's business from time to time, but at my own pace," Potratz said.

"Dean has been very helpful in helping me get this venture started," Potratz said.

When asked about free time, Potratz said their time is consumed by useful activities and hobbies.

"We've got two cats that we love and we also do some gardening. Deans hobby is here working at the shop so that makes my hobby here, but that's fine as we are spending time together," Potratz said.

Kelly's Food Stand
Now Serving!

- Hot Dogs
- Burgers
- Brats
- Maidrites
- Potato Salad

Mon-Fri: 11 AM-4 PM
Serving at Dean's Auto Sales