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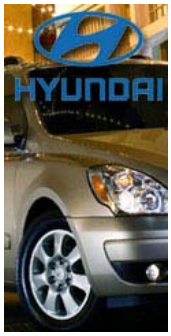

New location, same vision

Jan 5, 2007 05:44 PM EST

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January 1, 2007

Crisp County-- Business is looking better than ever for one South Georgia store. Over the years, they've grown tremendously and now Stripling's General Store has stepped foot on even more new territory where years and years of a family tradition still stands strong.

For more than 40 years, the sounds of brown paper tearing then covering a good uncooked meal have had a place in one way or another along Highway 300. It's a highway where news of a good thing travels fast.

"Word of mouth," said Stripling's customer George Stefano. Word of mouth all about one thing... meat.

"Our sausages is the thing," said Stripling's Owner Ricky Hardin. The business began humbly during the 1960's in the back of a grocery store. Then it moved to a now old and closed down location in Warwick.

"I can remember a time when we were cutting up about five hogs a week and now we never cut up less than 30 hogs a week," said Hardin.

Things have certainly changed since the Warwick days. For 15 more years, customers got used to another location in Crisp County. Now that building is empty, replaced by something new. It's a product of what owner Ricky Hardin considers changing times.

"We felt like the lake as much as it has grown up here, Lake Blackshear, we thought that we needed a bigger, more modern grocery store," said Hardin.

The new modern store offers a bigger produce department, more items and a better selection of frozen foods. But one thing remains constant. "They just like the way we make our sausage. It's a little bit different than the rest," said Hardin.

It's what brings George Stefano from Warner Robins at least a couple of times a month. "It's worth the drive. Take it home and slap it on the grill," said Stefano.

And although it's a South Georgia charm, the name Stripling's has come to be known all over the country. "It's just grown. I mean

it's just getting bigger and bigger," said Hardin.

That's good news for the business. They hope to continue that tradition for many more years to come.

The new location has been open for nearly three weeks now. Store owners have also recently developed a website. This allows them to deliver their special meats nationwide. Future plans include opening other locations. One would possibly be located along the interstate to serve people who don't travel along 300.

feedback: news@walb.com?subject=Stripling'sNewStore/LK

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