

# Distinguished steakhouse serves up big portions

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Beth Worthy wants her customers to experience the food at Amarillo Tex's Steakhouse and Saloon. Service, committed staff, fresh steaks and large portions are what separate her restaurant from the rest.

This is why the RiverBend Growth Association named Amarillo Tex's their business of the month.

Worthy began at Amarillo Tex's as a server in 2009. Within a year she was front of the house and catering manager.

Through 6 a.m. meetings and collaborating on the menu with owner Regina McCormick, Worthy's zeal paid off. She was promoted to general manager four months ago by McCormick, who is also her best friend.

"This is her baby," Worthy said. "She has decorated everything herself."

McCormick, who has a home in Collinsville, has homes in different states including Tennessee and Florida, and is trying to purchase a home in Alton.

One of the best parts of Worthy's job is seeing workers come back.

Many employees started college and worked at the restaurant all the way through. Three of her best servers are in law school.

"I have return people come back all the time for the holidays even after they go up into a higher education," Worthy said, beaming.

"They'll come back for Christmas and work here. And we're just really family-oriented here. It's just nice."

Steve Shelby, a kitchen manager at the restaurant, was greatly influenced by family of his own. He said his grandmother was a major example from whom to learn.

She inspired him to give the best seasoning, taste and presentation.

Presentation especially means a great deal to him.

"They always say you eat with your eyes before you eat with your mouth," Shelby said. "You're already starting to enjoy your food before you eat it."

He began working with food in a work environment at the age of 16 at McDonald's.

"Just been cooking ever since," Shelby said.

He even helped open The Pasta House in Amarillo Tex's current location.

Shelby says encouragement from customers helps him to go the extra mile. It makes him want to make the next meal that much better for the customer.

His experience and commitment to excellence has paid off — even outside of the workplace. Somebody in Shop ‘n’ Save noticed him in a company shirt and gave him a \$5 tip.

Jason Embrey is another one of Amarillo Tex’s kitchen managers. He also makes sure presentation is excellent.

“We have very good cooks here,” he said. “We’re very particular on how we cook our food. And how we present our food to our customers.”

If it does not meet their rigorous standards, they will not send it out to the table. They will re-cook the whole order.

Embrey treats his guests like members of his family.

“If I won’t feed it to them, why would I feed it to you?” he said.

He said if a person does not take pride in what they do, that person should find a different job.

Embrey began cooking food as a profession when he was 18 at The Pasta House, Amarillo Tex’s current location.

Embrey was a kitchen manager there at 23 years old.

He said the quality of the food separates Amarillo Tex’s from other restaurants.

“We’ve got the biggest steaks in town,” Embrey said. “They’re cut fresh daily.”

Amarillo Tex’s serve a children’s sirloin, 8-ounce, 12-ounce and 16-ounce sirloin, ribeyes and porterhouses.

He said Applebee’s is nice, but when customers want to get full they come to Amarillo Tex’s.

“We’re the only true steakhouse in Alton, I believe,” he said.

Embrey and his staff marinate the steaks for 48 hours before serving them.

They say their portions are comparable to Lotawata Creek Southern Grill in Fairview Heights, a restaurant known for mammoth-size helpings.

But Embrey said if you put good food on the menu at an affordable price, people will pay for it.

You can visit Amarillo Tex’s Steakhouse and Saloon on the Internet at [amarillosteak.com](http://amarillosteak.com).

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# Deep in the heart of Alton

By Fred Pollard  
Today's AdVantage

As big, brash and bold as the Lone Star State itself, Amarillo Tex's has risen above the competition to become the RiverBend Growth Association Business of the Month for January.

"We appreciate the award," general manager Beth Worthy said. "This is a great community and it is wonderful to be recognized."

The RiverBend Growth Association honors one local small business each month based on considerations including longevity, size and community service.

Amarillo Tex's opened at 180 E. Center Drive (near Alton Square Mall) in 2006 and continues to provide families and area professionals with mouth-watering steak dinners. Current owners Shelly and Regina McCormick purchased the restaurant in April of 2009.

"This is Regina's baby," Worthy said. "Everything hanging on the wall is something she has collected somewhere between Illinois and Texas, and she decorated the place."

Worthy has been with the company for over five years and oversees every aspect of the business, including the servers, the bar, and customer relations.

"I started as a server and worked my way up," Worthy said. "I have always loved working here."

For the last eight years, the dine-in and carryout establishment has provided an assortment of steak choices including the rib eye, porterhouse, KC strip, and filet mignon. Seafood, burger, rib and chicken choices round out the menu.

In 2011, Amarillo Tex's branched out into catering and deliveries.

"We also have private rooms for business meetings and parties, and we never charge for those," Worthy said. "We are happy to provide a place for both casual parties as well as business dinners."

Kitchen manager Steve Shelby has been with the restaurant since day one, and has seen the restaurant through many ups and downs. One thing he says has been consistent is the quality of the food they serve.

"We cut and marinate our steaks ourselves," Shelby said. "We also are the only ones who offer the 72-ounce steak challenge...if you eat everything within one hour, it's free."

Fellow kitchen manager Jason Embrey praised the restaurant's variety, character, and portion sizes.

"Everything is made fresh daily, and I mean everything," Embrey said. "Our meals are big, Texas-style. Our ultimate cheeseburger is just about the biggest burger I have ever seen."

Amarillo Tex's offers a variety of specials, including all-you-can-eat pasta on Tuesdays and steak and chicken fajitas on Sundays. In addition, it boasts no less than 72 martini flavors ("I have a recipe box filled with nothing but martini recipes," Worthy says.), and all martinis are \$5 every day.

Hours are 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily, staying open until 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. For more information, call (618) 465-6433 or visit the website at [www.amarillosteak.com](http://www.amarillosteak.com).

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photos by Fred Pollard

Amarillo Tex's in Alton has been recognized as the RiverBend Growth Association Business of the Month for January. From left, kitchen manager Jason Embrey, general manager Beth Worthy and kitchen manager Steve Shelby. At right, Tex's Ultimate Chicken. Below right, chicken fried chicken.

