

Antique store gets small business award

By Nathan Grimm - ngrimm@civitasmedia.com

GODFREY — In the span of a few years, Godfrey's My Antique Shop has experienced some low lows and high highs.

The shop has moved a handful of times since it has been in business, but the most recent move, to their current location at 1007 W. Delmar Ave., was prompted by necessity. In May 2009, a tornado ripped off part of the building on Broadway in Alton where the shop was housed. With a building under construction and nothing to do with their thousands of pieces of glassware, china, silver-plated flatware and other antiques, owners Mark and Audrey Stewart were forced to close their business.

"When we had to move out and put everything in storage, we were out of business," Mark Stewart said. "So we really didn't have a choice."

Early last year the store reopened, and the business is thriving. Closing the physical store forced the couple to turn to online sales, a move that has meant everything to the antique store.

"Really, that has been a huge benefit for us because, as markets change and people shop online more, we've been able to adjust and serve our local customers while also serving people all around the world," Mark Stewart said.

The move also afforded the couple more space to tout their wares. The new building has roughly 4,000 square feet of space, allowing the Stewarts to showcase much of their 16,000-item inventory. Mark Stewart said the new location, while not as accessible to the tourist crowd as their former spot, helps them connect with a new clientele within the Riverbend community.

It also contributed to the business being recognized as the RiverBend Growth Association's Small Business of the Month for April. Members of the RBGA presented the couple with the award Thursday, visiting the store to see everything My Antique Store has to offer.

RBGA director of member services Joell Aguirre said the business's longevity and commitment to the community made it an obvious choice for the award.

"They overcame the adversity of that 2009 tornado, and they still chose to keep a brick and mortar (building) and they chose to keep it in the Riverbend," Aguirre said. "They could have gone anywhere."

And the couple plans to continue to improve their newest — and final, Audrey Stewart said — location. Along with having new roofing, wiring, water and sewer connections, Mark Stewart said they're planning to improve the parking lot this year. Painting and tuckpointing the building are also on the agenda in the near future. Mark Stewart said they're on a "continual mission to keep improving the location."

They also recently bought 12 lighted display cases from an antique mall that will allow them to get even more inventory on the floor.

“It’s letting us get out some additional inventory that we didn’t have out — it was still in storage from when we had our disaster downtown,” Stewart said. “Believe it or not, we still have some stuff we haven’t gotten out.”

After a dark period, things continue to look up for the store.

“It’s been very good,” Mark Stewart said. “People are very nice. It’s a good location, we’re easily accessible. So it’s worked out really good for us.”

My Antique Store is open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on weekends by chance or appointment. For more information, visit the store’s website at www.myantiquestore.com.

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