

REIGNING RIBS

Alton restaurant named **Business of the Month**



The Telegraph/MARGIE M. BARNES

Rib City

Managing partners Dean Schmitt, left, and Shannon Knight of Rib City Alton show some of the restaurant's most popular dishes, chicken dinner and baby back ribs. Rib City has been named the RiverBend Growth Association's business of the month.

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By JESS CHARLTON - For The Telegraph

ALTON - Shannon Knight and her husband, Dean Schmitt, were shocked when they found out their business, Rib City, was named the RiverBend Growth Association's August business of the month.

"It's awesome," Knight, the restaurant's business manager, exclaimed.

"It's a great honor," Schmitt, the general manager, said. "When you're a business that's been open for only a little over a year, and you receive business of the month, it's just great. The RBGA has been very good to us and has supported us."

Rib City opened its doors on June 22, 2011.

Knight, a native of Alton, and Schmitt, a native of Iowa, met when they were working in Chicago at Lettuce Entertain You Enterprise.

Knight's mother, Brooke Miller, and her grandmother, Jean Geiger, are the main partners of Rib City.

"Shannon's mother and grandmother spent time in Fort Meyers, Fla., where they have a Rib City," he said. "They always said how they loved going there, but there was always a wait."

Soon enough, Knight's mother and grandmother found out about franchise openings for the Rib City business.

"They decided Alton would be the best place for a Rib City," he said.

Schmitt said Miller and Geiger asked them if they wanted to run the business because both of them had many years of experience in the restaurant business.

"We said 'sure,'" he said.

Rib City is well-known for its house special, baby back ribs.

"It's just delicious. The meat is very tender and just falls off the bone," Schmitt said.

Along with their baby back ribs, Rib City features smoked meats cooked on site, including barbecue chicken and St. Louis-style ribs.

Most of Rib City's fare is homemade, including salad dressing. Schmitt and Knight make sure all of their food is made fresh every day.

"Ranch is still the most popular dressing, but our spicy ranch dressing has been doing well here," he said.

Rib City offers catering service for special occasions, events or parties.

"Our catering services have been more on the rise lately. With our catering, we bring the food on site," he said. "We have a buffet style for our catering services."

Schmitt said they usually bring sliced meat or chicken for catering but can provide ribs if requested.

Rib City, 201 E. Center Drive, is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays.

For information, call (618) 462-4600 or visit the website at www.ribcity.com.