



New Main Street business to feature a dining experience that includes train watching

The cookies you have come to love at Grand Mall will soon be found at a second location in Ames in the Main Street Cultural District.

Mary Jo Banwart will open The Depot Deli and Cookies Etc. at the end of May in the old train depot at 526 Main Street at the end of May.

“We will have a patio where people can watch the trains,” Banwart said. “This will be a bit noisy but we are finding that a lot of people are train buffs.”

Banwart, who grew up on a farm eating her mother’s homemade cookies, started Cookies Etc. 30 years ago in Mason City, Iowa. All of the recipes she uses were her mother’s. The new business will feature those favorites along with sandwiches, soups, and salads.

“A deli is something I have wanted to do for a long time and I felt having the cookies would provide as complete meal option for people,” she said. “We will also have a selection of frozen items, like soups and quiches, for people to take home to reheat for dinner.”

Banwart, who lives in Ames, says the store in Grand Mall will stay open as well as her location in Clear Lake. She decided to open her new location in the Main Street Cultural District because she feels that exciting things are happening in downtown Ames.

“We are seeing a trend of people wanting to shop in small, locally-owned boutiques in a unique atmosphere which downtown Ames has in abundance,” she said. “And we were very excited about the depot because it is a very architecturally interesting building with a lot of history.”

Main Street Cultural District Executive Director Cindy Hicks calls this new business a great addition to the downtown area.

“We have a very diverse selection to choose from when it comes to dining in downtown Ames,” said Hicks. “This will give visitors to the historic heart of Ames one more option and an experience that they can’t get anywhere else.”

Banwart says she has done some fairly extensive repairs to the building, including removing five different types of flooring to get to the original Terrazzo flooring underneath and uncovering some of the depot’s original brick.

“We hired a company out of Carol that was able to refurbish the Terrazzo,” she said. “With the flooring and the brick we wanted to bring back some of the original character of the building.”