

## Jessica Busteed – Cornerstone Bakery – 1

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Donuts. Muffins. Scones. Hope. Wait a minute, what was that last one? Today we'll meet a young entrepreneur who has started a bakery in her rural community. In addition to baked goods, coffee, and lunches, the ultimate item which she intends to provide to her community is hope for the future. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Jessica Busteed and her mother-in-law, Linda Busteed, are the owners and founders of Cornerstone Bakery in Yates Center. Jessica grew up in the area, near the rural community of Toronto, population 281 people. Now, that's rural.

After living in Texas for a time, she and her husband came back to Kansas. He is now the elementary and middle school principal at Yates Center. For several years, Jessica telecommuted to her job in Houston.

In downtown Yates Center, a couple of older abandoned buildings around the beautiful town square were being sold at a tax sale. The Busteeds were able to purchase them at a bargain price. They wanted to remodel the upstairs as an apartment. "It had suffered weather damage, but was a neat old building," Jessica said.

Linda, Jessica's mother-in-law, was baking pies and brownies for the local farmer's market. Jessica also loved to bake. She was missing the types of coffee she could get in the big city.

The two women decided to remodel the native stone building and open a bakery and coffee shop. Since the stone building was located on a main corner, they named it Cornerstone Bakery.

They discussed how to decorate their new shop. "I would have gone all froufrou with girly stuff, like a café in Paris, but I wanted a farmer with muddy boots to be okay coming in here too," Jessica said. "I want everybody to be comfortable here."

They decorated the shop in what Jessica calls "farmhouse eclectic." The décor includes inspirational sayings, photos, and classic album covers on one wall. Customers have even donated items to decorate the shop. One plaque in the shop said, "Life happens, coffee helps." Another said, "Bake the world a better place."

Baking is something that the Busteeds enjoy. Cornerstone Bakery offers donuts, muffins, scones and other baked goods along with biscuits and gravy. As business has grown, they have added a daily lunch special, often with apple pie for dessert. Lunches are typically sandwiches, quiche and casseroles with various side salads. The bakery is not open for supper. "You have to get up really early to make donuts," Jessica said.

The bakery offers lattes and various types of flavored coffees. For example: One customer suggested an amaretto dark chocolate flavor.

For the lunch recipes, Jessica and her mother-in-law have experimented with pita bread, goat cheese, and more.

“One of our goals is to expose people to some newer foods, such as quinoa,” Jessica said. “Now people are trying it at home,” she said.

“The community is so supportive,” Jessica said. People purchase items and offer words of encouragement. Jessica is proud of the new energy and spirit that she sees in Yates Center.

When interviewed about the community for a recent film, she said, “It’s thriving. Not only in our community but in our county, it’s growing. People are looking for ways to participate,” she said.

“There are younger people moving back here,” she said. “I want to catch what drew them back. Older ladies will come into the shop and reminisce about good times in the town. They want to help too. New organizations in town are revitalizing the community. We need to communicate a culture of hope,” Jessica said. “There is hope and hope is contagious,” she said.

For more information, look for Cornerstone Bakery on Facebook.

Donuts. Muffins. Scones. Hope. Well, hope may not be specifically listed on the menu, but it is a key part of what is behind the offerings at Cornerstone Bakery in Yates Center. We commend Jessica and Linda Busted for making a difference with their delicious food and hopeful attitude in rural Kansas. I think I’ll have seconds.

And there’s more. Remember that Jessica was interviewed for a film? We’ll learn about that next week.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.