

## Johnny B. Good's Diner turns 25

*Diemers have been serving up generosity, good food on Lincoln*

**John F. Russell**  
Steamboat Pilot & Today

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — It might be hard to image main street Steamboat Springs without Johnny B. Good's, but thanks to the determination shown by Mike and Kathy Diemer 25 years ago, the diner has become one of downtown's most popular stop for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"We are blessed to have a business and a building on main street," said Mike Diemer, who opened the business in 1994 with Kathy and the Laidig family. "This isn't like Carthage, Missouri or Newburgh, New York. The opportunity to own a business on main street in this town is something that does not come around a lot. You will do whatever it takes to make it work."

For the Diemers, whatever it took meant sinking labor and money into renovating the space at 738 Lincoln Ave., which has been home to a bakery, The Royal Shaft and The Sidestep since the space first opened in 1914.

"When we were bar tending at the Sheraton tons of people with their kids would come up and be like, 'Where can we take our kids to eat,'" Kathy said. "Our goal was to open a family place, more so than a 50s diner."

Mike grew up in New York and moved to Steamboat in 1988 to train as a freestyle skier, and Kathy came in 1991 from

Chicago. The two were familiar with diners, which were popular in their home towns, and wanted to open in Steamboat.

The first few years owning the diner were tough. The Diemers bought out the Laidigs to help. Mike learned the ins-and-outs of the kitchen, and the couple figured out what it took to run a restaurant.

But in the past two decades, Johnny B. Good's, with its 1950s feel, has grown into a popular stop for locals and visitors who enjoy eating in an atmosphere filled with memorabilia, license plates and a menu reminiscent of days passed.

Mike said in the early days, the dream looked more like a money pit than a 1950s diner. Every day the couple was faced with another issue, another problem. But through it all the Diemers kept a sense of humor.

"They kept coming in and telling us that we needed to check something out, but that it was no big deal," Kathy recalls. "So we painted, 'It's no big deal' on the inside of the ice box door."

At one point in the construction Mike remembers crawling under the floor, holding a flashlight between his teeth, to check the aging floor joists.

"They told me that we needed to make sure the floor joists were in good shape before they started building," he said. "So I climbed through a 100 years of cob webs. They told me to grab the main joist and pull on it to see if it was strong. When I grabbed it the joist came apart like old, wet Styrofoam. I just started crying."



JOHN F. RUSSELL/STAFF

A lot has changed in downtown Steamboat Springs since the Diemers opened Johnny B. Good's Diner in 1994. The family includes, from left, Charley, 7; Mike; Kathy and Jack, 10.

But the Diemers never lost faith, and with the help of friends, Johnny B. Good's opened on Feb. 27, 1994.

"Friends came out of the woodwork to help us," Kathy said. "We were blessed."

That help is something that the Diemers have never forgotten, and it's one of the reasons they reach out to the community providing free meals to those that served on Veterans Day, free meals to first responders on Sept.

11 and generously give to the community when needed.

"You got to live the message. It's not just for show," Kathy said. "Being able to help people, even when we didn't have anything, we could help others, that's really what it's all about."

Mike said giving has been tremendously rewarding.

"We are not getting rich with our business," Mike said. "Our business allows us to live in Steamboat, have our life and

raise our family. If we can give back through the diner, that is part of it."

Mike said in the early days it was easy to lose sight of the important things. He still remembers when the construction took longer than he hoped, and the cost for the renovations were frightening. By the time new restaurant opened the 1994 ski season was in full swing

**25 YEARS, 11**

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This week, Community Ag Alliance is leading the celebration of Ag Appreciation Week (March 17-24) in Routt County. Over the past 140 years, the ranchers and farmers of our community have laid the foundation for this beautiful place we call home, and have established the Western heritage for which we are so well known. In 2017, the Agriculture Community was responsible for contributing over \$61 million to our economy.

As our community continues to grow, it is important to

recognize the contributions and hard work of our ag community. Coming from a five-generation farming family, I understand the hard work, long hours and satisfaction of their commitment. So this week, I encourage you to reach out, attend an event and thank our ag community for the sustenance they provide on a daily basis. Ask how you can support them, their families and our community. After all, as the Community Ag Alliance says, where would we be without agriculture? Naked and Hungry.



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# Moloney earns prestigious recognition from Coldwell

**Staff report**  
Steamboat Pilot & Today

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — Dave Moloney, a sales associate with Coldwell Banker Distinctive Properties in Steamboat Springs, has earned membership in the company's 2018 International Diamond Society, a level achieved by only the top 15 percent of Coldwell



**Moloney**

as the top individual sales agent in the Steamboat office.

Banker sales associates worldwide. In addition, Moloney was recognized

"It's an honor to be recognized as one of the top agents within Coldwell Banker," Moloney said in a news release. "I'm thankful for the many clients that have trusted me with their business and helped me achieve this level of success over the years. The awards are just a byproduct of helping my customers realize their real estate goals."

## 25 YEARS

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and Winter Carnival had passed by.

But for Mike it was easy to keep things in perspective.

"We were taking the paneling off the walls and my dad called," Mike said. "He told me that I was going to see a lot of bad things on the news, and that my brother was missing." Mike's brother, an army ranger, was somewhere in Mogadishu, Somalia, in the middle of a conflict with Somali militants.

"I'm very much into the news, and keeping abreast of what is happening in the world," Mike said. "I know that having a business on main street in Steamboat Springs is an amazing blessing and that we are so fortunate. Ninety-eight

percent of the rest of the world would trade places with us in a second."

During the long road to success, the Diemers learned lessons that they feel make the business better today. Mike still remembers when an old-timer called him over to her booth the first few days the diner was open.

"She called me over and said 'Good luck. It was really not good, but I know your are still new,'" Mike recalls. "It will probably be a year or two, but if you are still here I will be back to see if you have learned anything."

Mike viewed the criticism as a learning moment. He hired people in the kitchen to help improve the food and looked forward to giving locals and visitors a reason to come back.

"Honestly, I think that

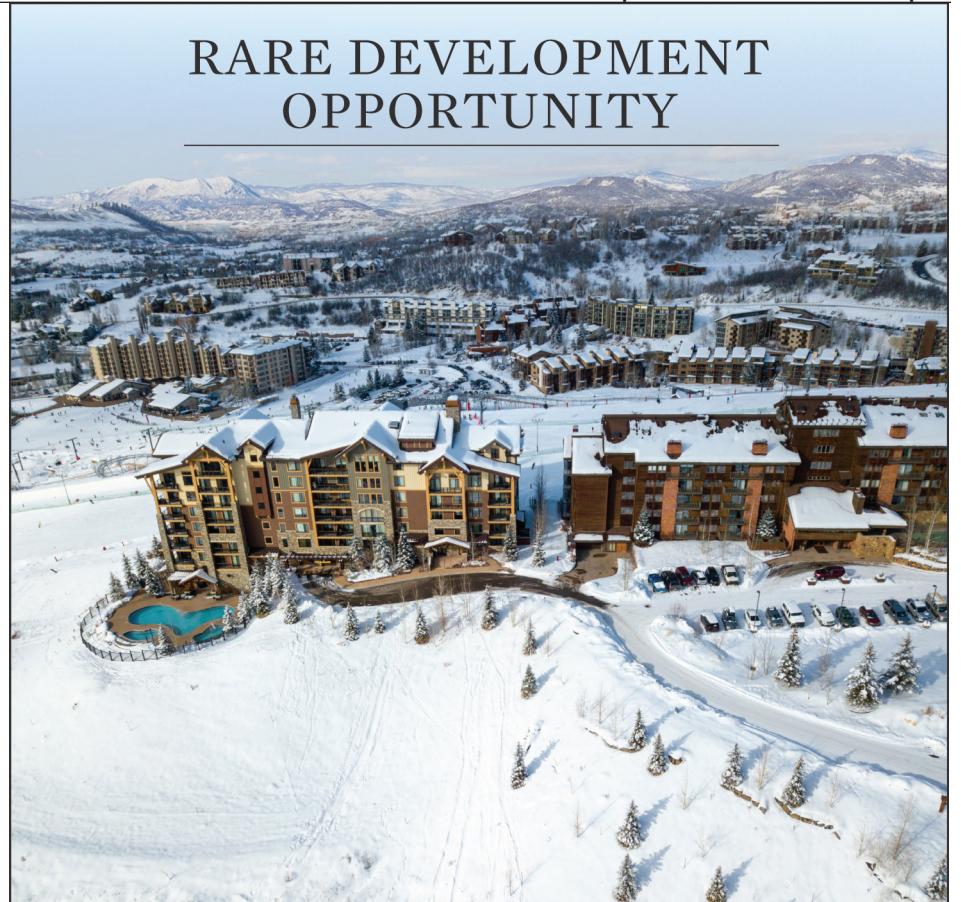
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Mike and I can both take criticism," Kathy said. "We take it and try to learn from it."

Twenty-five years later Mike and Kathy sit back in a booth at Johnny B. Good's talking about those early days surrounded by a bar full of people, booths filled with happy customers and the noise that can be found in any hometown diner. But thanks to the Diemers, this one just happens to be on main street in Steamboat Springs.

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