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TOP STORY

## In the dough: 'Baked' cookie shop enjoys sweet opening

By DON SERGENT [dsergent@bgdailynews.com](mailto:dsergent@bgdailynews.com)

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Chocolate, chocolate chip and Dexter cookies – a chocolate cookie baked new artisan cookie business owned by Jeff and Ali Townsend located in on Wednesday, March 10, 2021. Open since February 9, the bake shop off dough, with a variety of mix-ins from which customers can choose. (Gra

Grace Ramey

## MORE INFORMATION



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 +10 SLIDE SHOW: New artisan cookie shop opens in downtown Bowling Green

What started with a culinary arts class Jeff Townsend took as an elective while studying political science at Western Kentucky University has turned into a downtown business startup.

Baked, the business Townsend and his wife, Ali Townsend, launched last month at 825 College St., has tapped into the sweet tooth of enough Bowling Green residents to surprise even its founders.

“Our opening on Feb. 9 was just wild, and the following Saturday was crazy,” said Jeff Townsend, a 2008 WKU graduate. “It’s humbling to have that kind of response.”

Since that opening, the Townsends have slowly learned to adapt to the demand for the cookies that come in flavors ranging from traditional chocolate chip, oatmeal and peanut butter to lemon, brown butter and something called a monster cookie

that is seemingly packed with every ingredient on your grocery store's baking aisle – and then some.

It's Jeff Townsend doing the baking, drawing on that culinary arts class and the attention to detail that he cultivated while baking as a hobby.

Although he has a small display case for cookies in the shop, Jeff Townsend said it's rarely full because customers are snapping up the baked treats as fast as he can make them.

He spends most of his time baking the cookies that are ordered online for pickup.

“Right now, everything is based on ordering online,” Jeff Townsend said. “Every time I fill the case, it's gone in 30 minutes.”

One local resident who has helped empty that case a time or two is Jordan Elmore, an employee at the Kentucky Grand Hotel on College Street who discovered Baked while walking up the street to get coffee from Spencer's Coffee.

“I think I stopped in there three days in a row,” Elmore recalled. “The first time, he had some chocolate chip cookies on display.

“After the first bite, I said I had to buy some more. I’ve tried a plethora of different ones: the sugar cookie with Fruity Pebbles, oatmeal with chocolate chips, brown butter with white chocolate. It’s cool that you can mix in your own ingredients.”

Such responses have left a good taste in the mouth of Jeff Townsend, who left his job with a local manufacturer to pursue his dream of baking for a living. “I’m doing something I really enjoy,” he said. “I feel like I struck gold.”

His product is enticing customers like Elmore to come back, but Jeff Townsend credits his wife for helping bring in business through social media.

“It’s both of us,” he said. “There’s no way I could do this without her. She’s a full-time cosmetologist, but her work on social media has been absolutely critical for us.”

“I didn’t realize the power of social media,” Ali Townsend said. “Our first post on Facebook reached 29,000 people. We had a huge response that first day and sold out. We ate lunch about 8:30 that night.”

Ali Townsend said she is glad to see her husband realize his dream.

“He’s having a lot of fun,” she said.

“He’s very good at baking anything he has ever tried.”

She believes Baked has lucked onto a great location, with its proximity to downtown businesses and apartments and to the WKU campus.

“I love that Bowling Green favors local businesses over franchised places,” Ali Townsend said. “We feel lucky to be part of the downtown community.”

The Townsends are looking forward to being open later hours in the warmer months and catching some of the crowd from downtown bars.

Although the business has been open barely a month, Jeff Townsend already has plans for bigger and better things while saying he wants to keep the College Street location that was home to Mary Jane's Chocolates before its move to East Main Avenue.

"I'd like to start doing deliveries on or around the WKU campus," he said. "My big dream is to open a second location with more kitchen capability that's closer to Scottsville Road or Campbell Lane.

"But I don't want to close this spot."

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