

Capitol Report

State Senator Luann RIDGEWAY



JUSTUS' INJUSTICE

Smithville has a new restaurant that is not only among the best in the KC area, but is one of the best new restaurants in the U.S. It is owned and operated by two young entrepreneurs, Jonathan Justus and his wife, Camille Eckloff. The Justus family has owned businesses in Smithville since the 1800s, and both his grandfather and mother owned a pharmacy in town. When looking to open their own restaurant, the building known as “Justus Drugstore” was for sale. What better way to give homage to his family and preserve the historic name of the building than to call the new establishment “Justus Drugstore – a restaurant.”

The little restaurant quickly grew to prominence and is now an award-winning fine dining establishment that uses local products, including those from Shatto Milk Company (another award-winning Missouri business), Paradise Locker Meats, and fruits and vegetables from local farmers.

Then the Missouri Pharmacy Board told Mr. Justus that they were going to issue an order requiring the restaurant to either shut down or change their business

name. The executive director of the Pharmacy Board said that someone could walk into the restaurant and mistake the cooks for medical professionals! The board claimed the name ran afoul of a 1950's law that said the word “drugstore” could not be used in their name. I know it sounds outrageous, but this is the kind of stuff unrestrained bureaucracy can dole out.

Missouri has had nothing short of a miraculous turnaround in recent years from the number one job loss state in the nation to now being among the top job producers. A lot of work has been done to make Missouri a job-friendly state. Silly bureaucratic injustices like this only work to reverse the positive changes made. I am working with the governor and other area representatives to ask the Pharmacy Board to rescind its order. If it will not, I will be seeking a change in the law next year to prevent further action against this fine Clay County business. Your opinion makes a difference and your comments can also make a difference to the Pharmacy Board. Please contact me at luann.ridgeway@senate.mo.gov, or visit www.senate.mo.gov/ridgeway for more information.