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TOP STORY

## Saving A Mainstay

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Beersheba Springs Market

Beersheba Springs Market closed Jan. 7, and a community effort is underway aimed at its return.

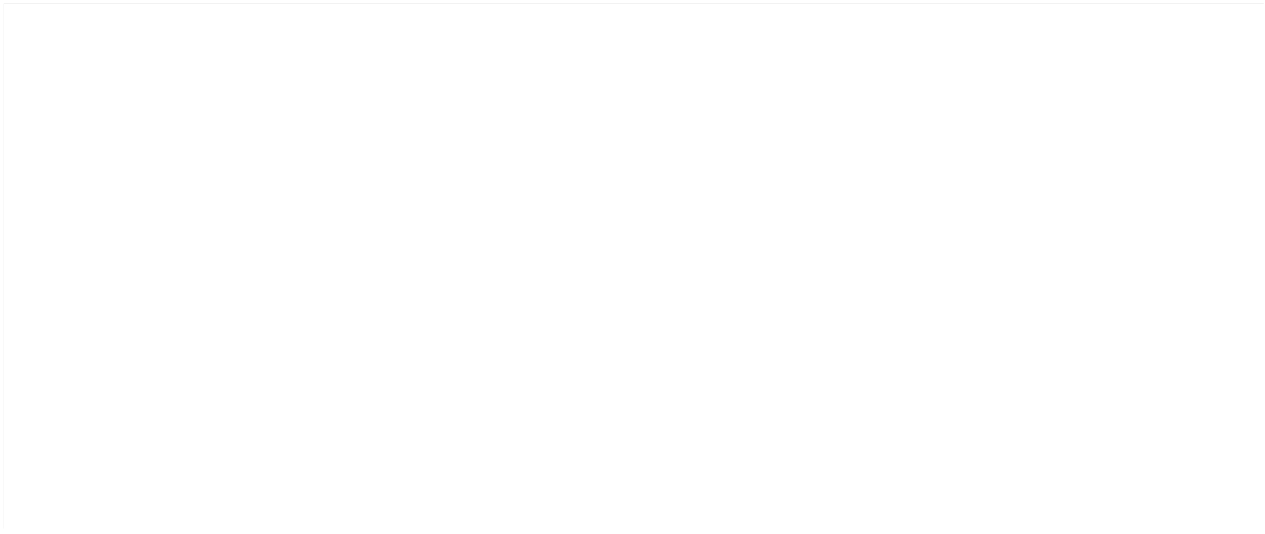
"The current owners have operated the business for 50 years or more," John Adams said, of Bud and Sharon Whitman. "They wanted to retire. No one showed interest in buying it. We, we being a number of people, wanted to keep the store open. Otherwise, we would have been out of business."



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Beersheba Springs and the community would become unincorporated and just disappear eventually, it seems like.”

To prevent Town of Beersheba Springs from being wiped off the map, the as-of-yet-unnamed group began a collaborative effort.



“We are currently in the process of trying to buy the property,” said Adams. “Nothing has been settled yet. At the moment, we are working with a Nashville-based legal firm and trying to get the paperwork complete. They’re working on it. The hope is to reopen the store so that it can continue to operate in the same spirit that it has for a long time, as a locally operated and locally loved store.”

If everything goes as intended with the purchase, Adams says group members will oversee renovations and the daily operation of the market. While continuing to offer local necessities, items will be added with tourism in mind. Having an entrance into Stone Door for Savage Gulf State Park a stone’s throw from the market will likely be a customer draw for the store with sightseers and hikers needing food, water, and other items.

“They are moving the entrance to the park next to the Post Office, which is right by the store,” said Adams. “That will be a big boon to the market. It will be a little while before that is open, maybe 18 to 24 months. That will bring a lot of traffic, being 150 yards from the store. We are going to do more with prepared foods, both eat-in and takeout. Have seating in the store. Buy a pizza oven. There are a lot of things we are going to do to appeal to the local community and meet the needs of people who come to visit the park.”

Beersheba Springs began attracting visitors after Mrs. Beersheba Porter Cain of McMinnville discovered a large chalybeate spring in 1833. She suggested that the water, with its high iron content, contained medicinal properties. By 1839, Beersheba Springs had incorporated and begun

official operation as a summer resort.



Adams says his ancestors were among those early visitors, "I'm a native Atlantean. I'm one of the Adams family who has been coming to Beersheba Springs since 1870. My great grandmother's family, when she was a little girl, started coming up around 1870. They wanted to get out of the city. They started spending summers up there. Her name was Sue Howell. There's a cottage in Beersheba Springs called the Howell Cottage. My wife and I visit Beersheba a good bit."

More information about the process will be available as the effort to save Beersheba Springs Market continues.