

Pops' Smokin' It food truck serves up BBQ in Stateline

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Pops' Smokin' It is back in North Idaho.

The barbecue food truck has been parked in Stateline since March, vending slow-cooked, smoked meats and sides such as baked beans and macaroni and cheese.

Business picks up Friday and Saturday nights when Nashville North, the country music venue that shares its unpaved parking lot with the mobile food vendor, is open. But Pops' Smokin' It owner Darcy Brioso said things have been slower on weekdays.

"We're trying to drum up business," said Brioso, 41. "There's not a whole lot of eating places out here."

Out here is West Seltice and North Baugh ways, just north of Wal-Mart and east of Cabela's off of the first exit in Idaho from Interstate 90. The dusty lot isn't shaded from the sun, but Brioso is planning to get an awning for the food truck and maybe some picnic tables, too.

"We're still trying to get it all figured out," she said.

Brioso, a 1993 Post Falls High School graduate, bought the business about two years ago from a couple who used to park the food truck at Tim's Special Cut Meats in Coeur d'Alene. She parked it in Portland before moving back to the Inland Northwest in February.

Brioso, now of Spokane, said she's kept the menu offerings the same but made some changes to the recipes. She also said she kept the original name of the business, so she can't explain the plural possessive Pops' in the spelling.

The menu features pulled pork, brisket and chicken all year and tri tips and pork ribs during summer only. The meats are smoked and slow-cooked on a wood-pellet-filled Traeger grill.

Sandwiches are \$6.50. Sides are \$2.50.

Macaroni and cheese with ham and bacon is a top-selling side. Other sides are macaroni salad, coleslaw, baked beans and potato salad.

The \$10 combination plate includes a choice of a sandwich or barbecue item, a side dish, chips and a drink.

"Tell people to at least give it a try once," said Brioso's son, Trinity Neverdahl, 22. "The meat falls apart, melts in your mouth. I had one customer buy two plates of food just for himself."

He will run the food truck when his mom goes back to school. Brioso plans to start law school at Gonzaga University in the fall.

A second employee helps out on Friday and Saturday nights, Nashville North hosts dancing lessons and concerts. Brioso, a widow, also has a daughter who lives in Portland.

“The plan is to build the truck with my children,” she said. “They will run the business and hopefully turn it into a brick-and-mortar someday.”

Meantime, Neverdahl said, “Mom’s boss at home and here.”