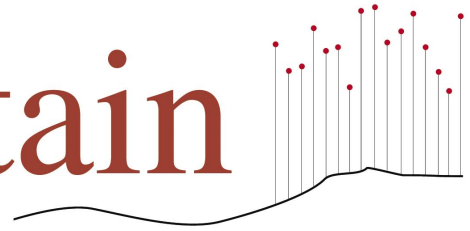


# SouthMountain

## DISTRICT NEWS



Serving South Mountain Village and Laveen

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## Historic Market Getting Facelift, New Focus

by Tom Brecke

**With the help of local zoning attorney, Del Monte Market has a fresh outlook and plans for a new restaurant.**

It may be more than 100 years old and the longest, continually operating grocery store in Arizona, but the Del Monte Market is on the verge of getting a facelift and a new outlook for its already storied life. The little market, on the southeast corner of 27th Avenue and Dobbins Road, has served generations of Laveen residents, providing cold beer, soda, and groceries as well as saddles and equipment for area ranchers and farmers. It even served as a gas station and used car lot in the 1960s and 70s.

Phyllis Beyer, a Laveen resident who was once a customer of the store, bought the Del Monte nearly five years ago and has carefully hatched a plan to return it to its former glory and create a community marketplace specializing in fresh meats, organic produce, wine and fresh baked goods. She also has designs for the "Grill of My Dreams," a restaurant that will feature an array of specialty gourmet burgers and sandwiches, among other items, and a full selection of breakfast fare. Beyer said she will also continue to sell eclectic western and Mexican antiques, architectural ornaments and fixtures, as well as saddles.

But Beyer said she couldn't have done it alone. Without the generous help of one of Phoenix's best-known zoning attorneys, it may not have happened at all.

With a somewhat unknown and strange history, the market was probably built around the turn of the century. It is listed on Maricopa County records as being built in 1908, but Beyer has found newspapers in the walls — used as makeshift insulation — from as early as 1902. Beyer said it was probably first built as a house, using homemade bricks from materials onsite, and then had rooms added on to create the structure it is today.

But when the market was annexed from the county to the city of Phoenix in 1960, for unknown reasons it was given an R-3 (multi-family) zoning designation. For more than 40 years the zoning was never an issue since the Del Monte could continue operating as is, under a legal, non-conforming use tag, since it was in business before the R-3 was applied.

However, with Beyer's new plans for the site, new zoning would have to be granted by the city, which proved to be a



The Del Monte Market will soon be home to "Grill of My Dreams," a restaurant that owner Phyllis Beyer hopes to have open this fall.

daunting task for her, who was not only running her business, but caring for her daughter who was diagnosed with cancer more than two years ago.

Beyer said the process of re-zoning almost caused her to throw in the towel on the market.

But when neighbors in Laveen put her in contact with Nick Wood, an attorney for Snell & Wilmer in Phoenix, things began to look up for Beyer and the Del Monte.

Wood, who helped Beyer shepherd her permit through the often-complex zoning process, did all work free of charge, wanting to give back to the Laveen community, where he works on other development projects for clients in the area.

"This is the oldest, continuously operating store in the state of Arizona," said Wood, who was able to help Beyer obtain C-2 commercial zoning earlier this year. "It's part of the historic and cultural fabric of Laveen and served generations, providing for their basic needs."

The new zoning will allow Beyer to continue with her plans, which she hopes will be completed by fall. It also comes with an historic preservation overlay that Wood said will require Beyer to maintain the market's historical components.

"I like to give back to the community in any way I can," said Wood. "This really benefits the entire Laveen area, not just the Del Monte Market."