

Belmont business owner appreciates trails

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The way Brian Baxter sees it, the local bike trails aren't just a great way to get a new view of the Lakes Region while enjoying some exercise at the same time. The entrepreneur says the paths are gearing up the local economy.

The owner of BB's Hot Bites -N- Cool Delights, Baxter parks his food trailer at Osborne's Agway in Belmont, where the Winni Scenic Trail and the WOW Trail now come to an end near the bridge over Lake Winnisquam. From this vantage point, he sees runners, walkers, cyclists and lots of tourists.

He tells the story of a couple visiting from Pennsylvania who stumbled across the trail while on vacation. They hopped on in Lakeport, pedaled 4.5 miles south to Osborne's Agway, and got a friendly welcome from Baxter, who was parked in his usual spot.

The man and woman ordered sandwiches from Baxter's truck and did some shopping inside Agway, where they were happy to find homemade doughnuts. Then, they treated themselves to some of Baxter's ice cream and headed back the way they came, with a dozen doughnuts for another time.

"They were new vacationers up here, and when they left to head back up the trail, they said 'We'll see you again next year,'" Baxter said. "They were just so delighted that they fell upon the trail and found a way to view the beautiful scenes of New Hampshire. It was a great experience for them."

He added: "They had a great meal. They felt safe and comfortable while biking. They had an adventure. Who wins on that? Laconia. Osborne's. Me, and the state of New Hampshire."

Every day, Baxter sees similar scenes play out on the combined trails. It offers stunning views of the region's lakes, a chance to walk, run, or cycle and feel safe, and it connects athletes, sightseers, and commuters to businesses that dot the path.

Cyclists come off the trail hot, thirsty, happy. They buy water and specials such as steak and cheese or egg salad sandwiches, and they talk about what a good experience they're having, Baxter said.

A Sanbornton resident, he's owned BB's Hot Bites -N- Cool Delights, also known as BB's Scoops, for about 13 years, naming the business "BBS" after himself, his son Brian, and his daughter Shelby. When the children were young, they both worked alongside him in the truck.

For many years, BB's traveled to events –fireworks, old home days, music festivals, weddings, and corporate functions. But Baxter and his wife, Mary, who is also involved with the business, decided they wanted to set down some roots. Now, you can find them set up at Osborne's, where they operate Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., BB's serves hearty lunch fare, such as hot dogs, burgers (including a black bean veggie burger), and grilled cheese sandwiches, along with daily and weekly specials. At Mary's suggestion, they also sell a fair number of Fluffernutter sandwiches – peanut butter and Marshmallow Fluff.

From 3 p.m. until close, Baxter sells only the ice cream he buys from Gifford's in Maine.

As his customers rest and eat, Baxter said they talk about the trail.

"They feel it's safe. They feel it's top-notch," he said. "There are stop signs. People adhere to etiquette. Everything is spelled out for you on the trail. People are impressed. I've talked to a lot of people about the trails, and I have only heard positive comments."

For more information about BB's Scoops, visit facebook.com/bbsscoops22; for Osborne's Agway, visit osbornesagway.com. For information on the WOW Trail, visit wowtrail.org, and for the Winni Scenic Trail, belmontnh.org/projects/winnitrail.asp.
