



DISCOVER HATFIELD'S BEST-KEPT SECRET: *FAB BBQ, Where There Are No Secrets*

For many locals, FAB BBQ is a place they didn't even realize was there, and that's exactly what makes it one of Hatfield's best-kept secrets. Located on the corner of County Road J within the Hatfield Arcade and Bar (the former Stones Throw Supper Club), FAB BBQ currently operates the kitchen seasonally, opening when the area trails open in mid-May. While the kitchen doesn't officially open until then, FAB BBQ offers catering in the off-season.

For Jackson Electric member Lance Ott, FAB BBQ didn't start with a business plan: it started in the backyard. "I took the same journey as a lot of people," Lance shares. "I started cooking at home, and the more I did it, the more I wanted to learn. I'd watch videos, try different things, and just keep working at it."



FAB BBQ uses locally sourced red oak in the pit, which is known to enhance the natural tastes of meats with its mild, smoky flavor.

What began as cooking ribs for family and friends slowly grew into something bigger. Requests started coming in for events, and before long, Lance found himself entering a local competition. The first two years of the competition, Lance cooked what he wanted. In the third year he cooked something he thought people in the area would enjoy, with a unique spin. "My wife said if we won, we should look for a place to rent that we could cook out of for catering."

Lance won, and the rest followed quickly. Lance learned of an opportunity to rent kitchen space at the Hatfield Arcade and Bar, bringing tradition, simplicity, and family values to Hatfield.

Not Your Stereotypical BBQ

While many people in the region typically align BBQ with BBQ sauce, FAB BBQ takes a different approach. "Here we season things with salt, pepper, and some seasoning salt and allow the meat to shine. Our philosophy is not to hide the meats," says Lance. "The sauces, pickles, and pickled onions are on the side for people to create their own bite, but we encourage everyone to try things on their own first. When cooked properly, the meats

taste delicious on their own," Lance explains.

FAB BBQ uses a traditional 500-gallon Primitive Pit offset smoker fueled by locally sourced red oak. "Everything is cooked traditionally on an offset smoker which is important to me," Lance says.

That approach has made brisket the most popular menu item, along with pit beans that often surprise first-time customers. "People don't expect the brisket or the beans," Lance says. "They try them and go, 'This is really good.'"



FAB BBQ doesn't hide the meat. Sauces, pickles, and onions are served on the side so customers can customize their bite.

A Hidden Gem, Even for Locals

Despite its growing popularity during trail and camping season, Lance



says it's often locals who are most surprised to learn FAB BBQ is there at all. "A lot of people from the area didn't even realize we were here," he says. "That's probably what makes it the best-kept secret."

FAB BBQ's location draws in trail users, campers, and visitors, but Lance wants locals to know they don't have to wait until May. "I'm always willing to talk to people about special requests," he says. "If someone has a party, a gathering, or an event, I want them to contact me."

A Place Built Around Family

The name FAB BBQ carries a double meaning. "While it's a play on 'fabulous,'" Lance says, "it's also the first letter of the names of my wife and children, and that part really matters to us."

FAB BBQ is designed to feel welcoming and family-friendly. During the season, guests can enjoy outdoor seating, eat near the arcade and bar, or pick up their order at the takeout window. "I like seeing people sitting outside, talking to each other," Lance says. "BBQ is meant to be social and bring people together."

Small details help create that experience. Lance writes customers' names on their tickets and calls them by name when their food is ready. "It sounds simple, but it makes a difference," he says. "People like being recognized."

Consistency, Care, and Early Mornings

"BBQ is a style of cooking that takes time and consistency," Lance says. "The time from when the brisket goes on the

pit to when it is sliced for a customer can be up to 24 hours."

A typical day during the season starts around 4:30 a.m., with briskets and pork butts going on well ahead of service. Ribs, pork belly, beans, sauces, and sides are prepared so everything is ready when the first customer arrives at 11 a.m. "I want the last customer of the day to have the same experience as the first of the day," shares Lance. "If something doesn't meet my standards, it doesn't leave the kitchen. I won't serve it if I don't think it's where it should be."

Looking Ahead and Staying Connected

As FAB BBQ continues to grow, Lance plans to expand the menu, add new equipment, and explore new cuts of meat, without losing what makes the business special. "To separate yourself, you don't have to reinvent the wheel," he says. "You just have to do things right."

Community involvement is also important to him, including future partnerships with area organizations and events. "I love teaching kids and hope to offer classes in the spring for kids to come learn to do BBQ."

For now, Lance's message to the community is simple: don't wait until May to reach out.

"If you have something coming up, just contact me," he says. "The restaurant may be open seasonally, but we can still talk about special requests."

At FAB BBQ, the secret isn't how the food is made, it's just knowing it's there.

—Brandi Shramek, Member Relations Supervisor



Jackson Electric member Lance Ott and his family stop for a photo on the outside patio at FAB BBQ, located on County Road J in Hatfield.

RULES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

These rules are in accordance with Jackson Electric Cooperative Bylaws, Article II, Section 7. Jackson Electric Cooperative's annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at the Lunda Theatre in Black River Falls.

Annual Meeting Rules

1. The meeting will be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised edition.
2. Any speaker must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
3. Only members and duly registered guests will be recognized by the Chair; each person so recognized must give his or her name.
4. Unless otherwise approved by the Chair, those recognized are to limit their questions and comments to three minutes, with any rebuttal limited to two minutes.
5. Questions and comments from members and duly registered guests will be in order during old and new business sessions, and at the conclusion of the officer reports, if invited.
6. No resolution affecting Jackson Electric Cooperative may be submitted by any member, unless written copies have been received by Jackson Electric Cooperative by February 18, 2026. This will permit time for review by the Jackson Electric Cooperative Board of Directors to make its recommendation to the meeting as to approval or rejection.
7. No signs or handouts will be permitted within the building of the place of the meeting, except such handouts as required for the official conduct of the Annual Meeting. No handouts made available outside of the building will use the name of the Cooperative, its letterhead or logo to imply that the Cooperative supports or opposes any resolution.
8. No demonstrations shall be held within the building of the place of the meeting.

Annual Meeting Voting Procedure:

- Members in Districts 2, 3, and 8 will be eligible to vote for their district representative. If the district seat is contested, voting will be done by in-person ballot vote at the Annual Meeting.
- Seats that are uncontested will be conducted by voice vote and all members present at the Annual Meeting shall be entitled to vote.
- All other business requiring membership action will be conducted by voice vote.

STAY SAFE AND WARM THIS WINTER: *Space Heater Safety Tips*

Space heaters can be a cozy way to stay warm during the colder months, but they also pose serious fire risks if not used properly. They can also be costly to operate and should only be used for supplemental heating.

Follow these safety tips to keep your home and family safe:

1. **Maintain a safe distance:** Keep space heaters at least three feet away from blankets, curtains, paper, and anything else that can burn.
2. **Use proper outlets:** Always plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Never use power strips or extension cords, as they can overheat and start a fire.
3. **Never leave unattended:** Turn off and unplug your space heater before leaving the room or going to bed.
4. **Protect children and pets:** Keep them away from space heaters to avoid burns or accidents.

For more safety tips, visit www.safeelectricity.org.

SMART TIPS FOR USING



SPACE HEATERS




To avoid a fire, space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet away from blankets, curtains, paper and other flammable materials.



WIRED THROUGH TIME



Left: At 84, Mrs. Green knits lace doilies in her home, patiently saving the small proceeds toward a freezer she hoped one day to afford. Right: Mrs. Green stands beside the freezer gifted to her by members of her Millston-area homemakers' club.

In February 1954, *Wisconsin REA News* shared a heartwarming reminder that generosity often comes full circle. At 84 years old, Mrs. Peter Green of Black River Falls had already given a lifetime of service to Jackson County. A practical nurse by trade, she once operated the county's first hospital from her own home.

After recently finishing a modest six-room house, the Greens faced a simple but meaningful challenge: they had no home freezer. With no transportation

and no room in the budget, food storage remained difficult. Rather than complain, Mrs. Green did what she had always done and went to work. She began knitting lace doilies, setting aside the small proceeds for a freezer fund. After a year and nearly 100 doilies, she had saved about \$20.

When members of her Millston-area homemakers' club learned of her efforts and remembered all she had given to Jackson County, they decided it was time to give back. Working together, they

secured a freezer at half price through the manufacturer, with a local appliance dealer covering the rest.

The surprise presentation at the county homemakers' meeting was met with cheers and tears. Mrs. Green later said she offered a silent "thank you" each time she opened the freezer door. She knitted a doily for each woman in the club as a way of saying thank you. More than an appliance, the gift was a tribute from a grateful community to a woman who had spent her life serving others.

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