**Mebane store celebrates 'a simpler time' with locally made goods**

**By Kelly Hinchcliffe**

Less than 4 miles from the hustle and bustle of the Tanger Outlet shopping center in Mebane sits a quiet, 95-year-old house filled with locally made goods and a hot cup of cider waiting to welcome its visitors.

Owners Bill and Cindy Laws and Chad Lloyd bought and refurbished the old house to create their dream business – the [**Down Home Garden Center and General Store**](http://www.wral.com/entertainment/out_and_about/venue/11839324/)**,** which opened Sept. 10.

"It needed a lot of work, but we thought it would be perfect," Cindy Laws said. "We fell in love with the community."

A long gravel driveway leads to the house at [**6500 U.S. Highway 70**](http://www.downhomegarden.com/index.html), near the Buckhorn Road exit off Interstate 40/85. Freshly cut Fraser Fir Christmas trees from Sparta, ranging in price from $45 to $80, adorn the front lawn, while rhododendrons, pansies and other plants for sale accentuate the side of the house. Each plant comes from local nurseries and features vibrant, sometimes hard-to-find colors.

"A lady came in this week and said we have the prettiest poinsettias in town," Bill Laws said. "We go to nurseries and pick out the plants ourselves."

Outdoor swings, chairs and benches for sale made by a local woodworker from Graham dot the walkway up to the front porch. Once inside, visitors are greeted by Cindy Laws, who offers her guests a hot drink and a piece of fruitcake. Each room inside the house features different goods for sale, made mostly by local hands.[**A few of the finds include**](http://www.wral.com/entertainment/out_and_about/image_gallery/11830767/)**:**

* MoonDance Soaps from Raleigh
* SugarRush Fudge from Mebane
* Señora Dixie Salsa from Wake Forest
* Hand-made dolls and stained glass from Mebane
* Tay's All Purpose Southern BBQ Sauce from Cameron
* Molasses from Louisburg
* Heirloom variety bulbs from Biltmore
* Peanuts from Bertie County
* Decorative steel wall hangings from Mebane
* Hand-painted cards and Moravian stars from Winston-Salem

"We’re big on using local vendors. We really try hard to deal with people here," said Bill Laws.

Creating that atmosphere took a lot of hard work. The Laws, who retired after spending years in the telecommunications and construction industries, decided to pursue their passions, combining his love for plants and her desire to open a general store and eventually a coffee shop.

"I thought Cindy was nuts. You sneeze hard enough and (the house) would come down. I was very skeptical," Bill Laws said. "It took a long time (to renovate). I’m not a very patient person."

Cindy's former co-worker, Chad Lloyd, joined the team and [used his construction skills to update the house](http://www.wral.com/entertainment/out_and_about/image_gallery/11838486/), which was built in 1917. They painted, restored the original hardwood floors, demolished the kitchen to build a bathroom, took off the screened porch, built a handicapped-accessible deck on the side of the house and added new electrical and air conditioning.

"God had a plan, and He brought people in our lives to make it work out," Cindy Laws said.

The couple visited quaint, local stores in western North Carolina to get inspiration. They wanted their Mebane store to have the same feel and let people get "back to a simpler time," Bill Laws said. "We are very proud of the type of atmosphere we have here."

"We always had a dream," Cindy Laws said. "It's nice to be able to get up and look forward to going to work."

**STORE HOLIDAY HOURS**   
Monday : 10am - 6pm  
Tuesday : 10am - 6pm  
Wednesday : 10am - 8pm  
Thursday : 10am - 8pm  
Friday : 10am - 8pm  
Saturday : 10am - 8pm  
Sunday : Noon - 6pm

**ADDRESS**  
6500 U.S. Highway 70 West  
Mebane, N.C. 27302

**DIRECTIONS FROM RALEIGH**  
Take I-40 West towards Burlington/Durham. Take the Buckhorn Road exit, Exit 157. Turn right at the top of the ramp onto Buckhorn Road. Cross over the railway tracks and turn left at the stop sign onto U.S. 70 West. The store is less than ¼ of a mile on the left.

**CONTACT INFO**  
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Marketing director Laura Lloyd, [laura@downhomegarden.com](mailto:laura@downhomegarden.com)

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