



GAYLE WEBER • HAYS DAILY NEWS

Alex Leslie and Mary Goddard roll pans of lasagna down the sidewalk to be served Sunday at the Mother's Day dinner sponsored by the Morland Lions Club.

Club strives to bring more to Morland

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MORLAND — Mary Goddard will put her Lions Club up against any other. The hard work, determination and spirit of each member shines through in each project the club takes on, including the annual Mother's Day dinner Sunday at Prairie Junction.

"When the call goes out, you don't have to worry about people showing up," said Goddard, president of the Morland Lions Club. "They show up with two things, not one."

The club began in January 1954, started including women some time after and enveloped the Morland Merchants group in the 1990s to boost its numbers. Today, it stands at 29 active members in a community of 150, with four honorary members — those who have reached age 80.

"It's been a good organization for the community," said Charlie Minium, one of the charter members of the club. Each year, the Lions Club sponsors many community events, including the Mother's Day dinner, which fed more than 125 Sunday. They call upon the talents of their members, such as Alex Leslie's barbecuing skills to prepare pork loin for the meal, to make each event a success. Leslie said he has been a member of the club for 28 years, but the dinner has been an annual event for much longer than that.

"It's fun when you all can get together and do it and have a reason for doing it," said Charlotte Keith, the club's secretary who other members described as the "rock" of the group.

Sunday's dinner was a fundraiser for Morland Mercantile, a community store the group hopes is able to open sometime this year, with a grand opening planned for the fall when the governor's pheasant hunt visits Norton and Graham counties.

Much of the club's efforts in the past few years have been focused on raising money and donating time and



Morland Lions Club secretary Charlotte Keith, center, takes care of some plates as many people enjoy the dinner at Prairie Junction.

labor to the store. An Italian feast each of the past two years has raised enough to purchase coolers for the store, and Sunday's dinner proceeds will go toward shelving and hiring two workers.

The town has been without a store for a few years after Bob Bean retired from owning the previous one. That followed the closings of the high school and grade school, and all of those events spurred the Lions Club to action. Morland Community Foundation now owns the mercantile building, but many Lions members have stepped up to help remodel it, and besides two paid workers, community volunteers will staff the store.

"Anybody that has something to give has helped us out," Goddard said. "We can truly call it our store."

Eventually, Leslie said, a kitchen incubator will open in the store, allowing locals to make foods to sell in a state-certified kitchen. Cooking lessons also could be offered.

The same community spirit behind the community store got behind Prairie Junction when Faye Minium opened it. The restaurant serves lunch daily and is open Friday and Saturday evenings, serving some of



Leslie and Goddard take a look at the lasagna they prepared for the dinner.

Leslie's barbecued meats. "People come from all over to eat here," Goddard said. However, it is a lot of work, said Faye Minium, who runs the restaurant with many of those aforementioned community volunteers.

"I tip my banker over the lunch hour," Goddard said with a laugh. "And the other banker is the cook."



Families enter Prairie Junction on Sunday for the Mother's Day dinner.



Donna Mowry dishes up desserts for the Mother's Day dinner.

Faye Minium also owns a building at the end of the block that can be used for gatherings. Some of Sunday's meal was prepared there, then rolled down the street to be served at Prairie Junction.

Taking over the restaurant for the day is just one more way the Lions Club gives back to the community.

"This is just what we do," club member Donna Mowry said.