

New, larger soup kitchen opens

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THOMASVILLE — Five years ago, Erlean Douglas opened her first soup kitchen in Thomasville, saying it was the fulfillment of God's purpose for her. It was really just the beginning of the effort, however.

At 10 a.m. today, Douglas, flanked by volunteers and donors, will cut a red ribbon and host a grand opening of a new, larger soup kitchen at 521 Madison St. across from the Salvation Army.

"I can't hardly wait," said the 83 year-old Douglas.

She said when she opened her first kitchen, "I came by the street and saw a man eating out of the Dumpster, and I said, 'Lord, this man is eating out of this dirty garbage can.'"

"And God said, 'This is the reason why I'm sending you to Thomasville, to feed these people,'" recalled Douglas, president of Rescue Mission Ministries.

Over the years, Douglas and her volunteers served thousands of people, sometimes as many as 350 a day. However, Douglas feels called to serve more.

Almost exactly one year ago, her first soup kitchen closed and preparations began to open a bigger one.

During the grand opening, Douglas plans to thank donors with a brunch and tour of the new facility.

"There are just so many people to thank. It really was the whole community that came out to help us. I am so thankful," she said.

After the grand opening, the new Rescue Mission Ministries soup kitchen will serve its first lunch from 1 p.m.-2 p.m. Going forward, the soup kitchen will be open Monday through Friday at the same time.