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ROLLERS

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"They're Southern-rich, made with all-natural ingredients," said Harford, also known as "The Roll Lady."

"They may not exactly be good for you, but they sure are good to you."

Last October, Harford, who started Whole-ly Rollers bakery in Chesapeake, opened a retail location at the Five Points Community Farm Market at 2500 Church St. On Saturday, Whole-ly Rollers is hosting its Norfolk grand opening, with free samples of those luscious yeast rolls as well as other specialties, including bread pudding; sweet potato, ham and turkey biscuits; sweet potato pie; cookies and more. Door prizes also will be given away every half-hour from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"It's going to be wonderful," Harford said. "There will be lots of food and we want everyone to come out and try it."

Whole-ly Rollers may have only recently opened in Norfolk, but the business began in 2009, prompted after Harford made an interesting observation.

In 2008, Harford said she noticed that people were paying \$7 to \$8 for a dozen rolls that were similar to hers, but, according to her friends, not as good.

"That's when I thought that maybe I should start selling mine," she said.

Still working as a school counselor, in 2009 Harford got a business license, had her kitchen inspected, and soon was taking orders and selling yeast rolls part time from her Deep Creek home.

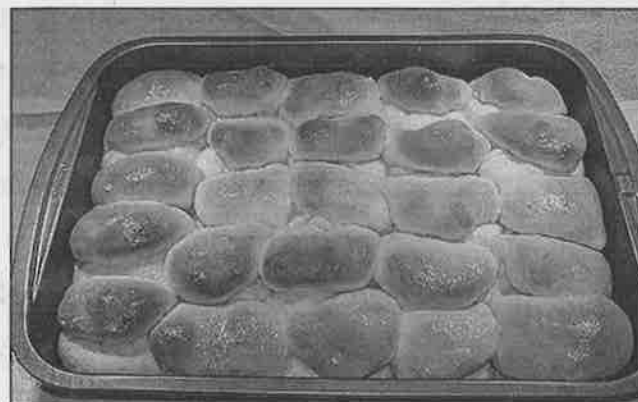
With a bit of marketing help from her twin sister, Linda Thompson, demand quickly got to be more than Harford could manage in her residential kitchen. In 2010, she and her husband, Richard, decided to invest in an expansion, adding more counter space, ovens, and a bigger exhaust system.

Harford's brother, Bishop Daniel Robertson of Mount Gilead Full Gospel International Ministries in Richmond, gave Harford her first



LIA RUSSELL PHOTOS | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Supervising manager Muri Parker offers samples of Whole-ly Rollers baked goods to Ghent resident Amanda Jacobsen at the Five Points Community Farm Market.



going?

What Grand opening of Whole-ly Rollers Norfolk location, with free bakery samples, Starbucks drinks, hot dogs, popcorn, door prizes and entertainment

Where Five Points Community Farm Market, 2500 Church St.

When 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday

Info Visit www.whole-lyrollers.net or call 757-717-3999.

GRANDMA'S RECIPE

Annie Mae Langley, Brenda Harford's late grandmother, developed the yeast roll recipe used by Whole-ly Rollers bakery. Harford said she spent about six months perfecting the original recipe.



LEFT: COURTESY PHOTO

big contract, and she began making weekly deliveries to his church.

That year, Harford made the decision to devote herself full time to baking and left her school job.

"I don't have any regrets," she said, adding that her gross sales last year were in the six-figure range.

Since 2010, Whole-ly Rollers, whose motto is "We are rising to your occasion," has been selling baked goods by special order and at farm markets throughout Tidewater.

Harford's yeast rolls literally have become a hot commodity.

Larry Williams, who works at Norfolk Naval Station, recently made a trip to the Five Points market to buy rolls after tasting them at a catered lunch event at his office the day before.

"Three pans of ham and turkey biscuits disappeared in about 10 minutes," he said.

Williams, who lives in Virginia Beach, planned to make a second trip to the market that evening with his wife.

Once you try the rolls, Harford said, you'll be a repeat customer.

Case in point: Norfolk resident, Allison Herman, who shops at Whole-ly Rollers weekly.

"You heat the rolls and put some butter on them and you can have a good time with that!" she said. "You can't go wrong, they're the best."

Harford said she hopes to expand Whole-ly Rollers' presence in Hampton Roads. She has contracts with several area bakeries and restaurants and is working on exclusive products for other locations. Perhaps one day Whole-ly Rollers products will be available on supermarket shelves and freezers, Harford said.

Meanwhile, Norfolk residents are lucky to have Harford's baked goods close by.

"I never thought the business would grow like it did," she said. "But I did know that across the board—young, old, black, white, male, female—everyone loves the rolls."

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