



For Immediate Release

GRAND REOPENING OF GEMINI GIANT AT THE LAUNCHING PAD IN WILMINGTON, IL FRIDAY MAY 3RD

The public is invited to the grand re-opening of the Launching Pad Drive-In restaurant, featuring the Gemini Giant muffler man statue, which will be held all throughout this weekend May 3-5 in Wilmington IL, in conjunction with the Illinois Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Festival. The formal Wilmington Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting will be Friday, May 3rd at 2pm at the iconic Route 66 location. Stay around for a delicious meal and enjoy the Rusty Nutz Car Club Cruise Night, which is the Launching Pad's first official cruise night. The Launching Pad will also be a part of the Red Carpet Corridor Festival on Saturday, and will continue the grand reopening with giveaways on Sunday.

The story of the famous location began when John and Betty Korelc opened a Dairy Delite at the location in 1956. The Gemini Giant was purchased and added to the site in 1965, and the restaurant was expanded and renamed The Launching Pad. The 28-foot tall Gemini Giant is one of many giant Muffler Men advertising statues found throughout the country in the 1960s. The Gemini Giant is named after the Gemini space program and holds a silver rocket ship in his hands, while sporting an astronaut's space helmet.

New owners of the Launching Pad, Tully Garrett and Holly Barker, purchased the restaurant in 2017 after it had been closed since 2010, and have been hard at work restoring the attraction and reopening the restaurant. Since February, The Launching Pad has been rolling out their new menu of delicious "comfort food" and is now fully operational, with a huge ongoing attendance of patrons. The restaurant also features an Americana museum and a gift shop.

Holly and Tully were introduced to the Route 66 community at the 3rd Annual Route 66 Miles of Possibility Conference held in Joliet in 2017, and quickly became favorite personalities among the Route 66 community. They plan to be married this summer with a special celebration at The Launching Pad.

The Launching Pad is located at 810 East Baltimore Street (Route 66) in Wilmington. Hours are 11am to 8pm, 7 days a week. For more information, call 815-476-6535 or visit www.facebook.com/thelaunchingpadroute66.

