After 30 years as electrician, Aberdeen man finds a second act with Triple T Catering

By **Jason Lopez Martinez** · July 16, 2026 in **Business**, **Featured**, **News** Reading Time: 5 minutes



Troy Hofer prepares an order inside the Triple T Grill and Catering food trailer during the downtown event on Thursday, July 2. Aberdeen Insider photo by Jason Lopez Martinez.

At his friend's funeral, Troy Hofer made up his mind.

For years, the Aberdeen native had talked about making Triple T Grill & Catering a full-time endeavor. The business had grown steadily from handling a handful of golf tournaments to a side job that filled evenings and weekends. But leaving a stable career after 30 years as an electrician was a leap Hofer wasn't sure he was ready to take.

Then, he lost one of his closest friends.

"I was probably at his funeral," Hofer said. "I just decided that day that I was gonna go for it and go do it and see where I end up."



Jeff Ochs spent years encouraging Hofer to make the change from electrician to a full-time food provider.

"He told me over the last five years numerous times," Hofer said.

Ochs, a former Aberdeen Central High School and Northern State University basketball player whom Hofer referred to as "The Big Guy," died of cancer in October. His death served as a turning point.

About four months later, after informing his employer in January, Hofer retired from his gig as an electrician on April 15 and committed himself fully to his catering business.

"It was a little of both," Hofer said of retiring. "But, you know, excited to do something new. And if it's not scary, it's probably not worth doing."

Health care had long been the biggest obstacle. Hofer said concerns about insurance kept him from leaving his job as an electrician sooner. Once he realized he could make it work financially, the decision became easier.

On his first day after retirement, Hofer was back in his shop preparing to take Triple T to the next level.

"It just felt really good to just do what I wanted to do and not have to ask anybody," he said.

Today, Hofer can be found in the Triple T Grill & Catering trailer serving breakfast to early-morning workers, grilling burgers outside Runnings or catering events across northeast South Dakota.

Almost an accident

The business itself started almost by accident.

While helping with the Cougars Classic golf tournament, Hofer cooked pork loin for participants. The following week, another tournament organizer asked if he could make pulled pork.

Hofer said yes.

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What began with a single pulled pork order quickly snowballed. Golf tournaments turned into holiday parties, business lunches and community events across the region.

Eventually, Triple T became more than a side hustle Hofer squeezed into his spare time.

"I didn't expect to be as busy as we are," he said. "I get calls almost daily. It's been a fun ride so far, and I look forward to what the years have in store for us."

What hasn't changed is what Hofer enjoys most.

"Just seeing smiles on people's faces," he said. "When they eat my food and tell me that's the best burger I've ever had, or pulled pork or whatever it is. Seeing people enjoy my food is reward enough."



Sydney Hofer, Troy Hofer's daughter, hands an order to a customer from the Triple T food trailer during the downtown event on Thursday, July 2. Aberdeen Insider photo by Jason Lopez Martinez.

Hofer's daughter joins Triple T team

The business has become a family effort.

Hofer's youngest daughter Sydney handles much of the behind-the-scenes work, from helping manage social media to taking orders and serving customers.

"I do basically everything besides cook," she said with a laugh.

Sydney was in college when Triple T began taking shape. At the time, she never imagined where it would lead.

"If you would've told me that he has a food truck and all that stuff four years ago, I would've thought you're crazy. But, here we are," she said.

She remembers the day her father called with unexpected news.

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"He was like, 'Guess what I just did?'" Sydney said. "I was like, 'What?' and he goes, 'I just bought a big food trailer. Want to see it?' My face was like, 'What is happening?'"

When Hofer later announced he was retiring from his job of three decades, she was surprised.

"I was making sure he had ducks in order," she said. "Its always scary going off and doing your own thing."

Since her father committed to Triple T full time, Sydney said she has noticed a change.

"I think this is more of a dream for him," she said. "He's definitely a lot happier and enjoys what he does a lot more."



Early wake-up calls

She said her father smiles more, spends less time by himself and has embraced the early mornings that come with running the business.

"He used to hate being up that early. Now he actually loves to get up in the morning because he has a goal in mind," Sydney said.

What customers don't realize, she said, is how much work happens before the trailer opens.

"I don't think they see how hard he actually works," Sydney said. "He makes sure the food is always amazing. He takes time and makes sure everything's perfect. He's really hard-working."

Sometimes that means 4:30 a.m. wake-up calls before heading out to serve breakfast.

"We were up at 4:30 today," Sydney said.

Working together hasn't always been seamless.

"We get into little fights, I won't lie. But it's been ultimately good. Our bond has definitely grown," she said.



Troy Hofer, left, and his sister Tina prepare orders inside the Triple T food trailer during a downtown event on Thursday, July 2. The catering is operated by multiple Hofer family members. Aberdeen Insider Photo by Jason Lopez Martinez.

The support from family and the community has helped Triple T. Hofer's parents pitch in when needed. His sister lends a hand. His daughters offer encouragement and ideas.

"I think support from everyone, and especially (from Ochs), meant everything," Sydney said.

She believes her father's outlook changed after losing his close friend.

"You truly do only live once, and you've got to make it count," she said.

As Triple T continues to grow, Hofer hopes customers remember more than what's on the menu.

"Fair price and great food," he said.

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And if Ochs could see what Triple T has become?

"He'd probably want a triple cheeseburger," Hofer said with a smile. "He always had to go for the biggest and the best."

Asked whether his longtime friend would be proud, Hofer paused for a moment.

"Oh, yeah," he said.

Triple T is open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Runnings parking lot and from 3 to 9 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at Lee Park Golf Course.