

# Get cool!

## Urban League helps launch Rita's Ice

By Sandra Clark

A downtown business is battling the summer's heat one frozen ice at a time. Rita's Ice of Knoxville is fast becoming a fixture on Market Square since opening in November 2008. Nancy Langkamer of Corryton, a landscape designer by training, is happy with her franchise and wants to get a second and third spot going. "We're the only place with old fashioned, freshly

made Italian Ice made here," she says. "A good product and extremely friendly customer service make for a winning combo." Langkamer has a large store with seating for 50 and a backroom for private parties that holds 20 adults or 25 kids. "It's family friendly and inexpensive. I'm passionate about being involved in the community. I want to be generous with what God has blessed me with." Nancy's business might have died aborning, but for help from Felix Harris and the Knoxville Area Urban League. Nancy says it was more than a place to go for a loan. "Felix Harris gave me good advice, and I worked with SCORE to develop a business plan. It was designed right from the start. I've kept in contact. We meet every two months to review our financials and discuss marketing ideas." Harris, who

dropped by Rita's for the interview, said his agency looks for people who want to start a business or who already have a business. "We don't compete with banks, but we're able to take more risk than a bank. Our job is to help (clients) succeed." Harris said there was no minority requirement for the KAUL loan, but the federal money he disburses is available for businesses within the city's Empowerment Zone. The program has been in existence for 10 years and has almost \$2 million on the books. Friendly and engaging, Harris is at home at Rita's. "This business is good for Market Square," he says. "It's good for Knoxville." **Info: Rita's, 26 Market Square, 673-4888. Urban League, 1514 E. Fifth Avenue, 524-5511.**



Nancy Langkamer, owner of Rita's Ice of Knoxville, serves a young customer