

Cheddar's coming to Kentucky 54

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Upscale casual dining restaurant will seat 400, employ 150

By [Keith Lawrence](#)

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The dining scene on Kentucky 54 will add a major draw this summer when the Greer Cos. of Lexington opens an 8,200-square-foot Cheddar's Casual Café in Highland Pointe.

The restaurant, which features a flaming double-sided outdoor rock waterfall and pools, will be next to the U.S. 60 bypass just south of Maloney's Roca Bar.

"My mother (Mary McBrayer Greer) is from Owensboro, and we've been trying to do something there for a long time," Lee Greer, president and co-founder of the commercial development company, said Friday.

Greer said he almost chose the strip in front of Home Depot on Frederica Street for the restaurant.

Although Frederica is still Owensboro's prime commercial address, Greer said he looked at Wal-Mart's success on Kentucky 54 and decided that the area is coming on strong.

Frederica, he said, has about reached its limits for development.

Cheddar's, a 30-year-old company based in Irving, Texas, has 63 stores in 16 states. And the Greer Cos. is the franchisee for 13 of them.

"We're about to open the 14th, in Ashland," Greer said. "We hope to open the 15th, in Owensboro, in late spring or early summer.

Construction on the 400-seat restaurant will take four months after the groundbreaking, which Greer hopes will take place later this month.

The Roca Bar next door seats 300. That means a lot of customers can be seated in the two larger restaurants and the smaller Culver's Frozen Custard & ButterBurger in Highland Pointe.

Greer said his restaurants usually win awards in each community for their beauty.

"We have a 500-gallon aquarium in the lobby," he said. "It's about 12 feet long. And we have a regional photo gallery with about 30 prints of scenes from the region around the restaurant."

Cheddar's is considered an "upscale casual dining" chain. But Greer said the prices don't reflect that.

"Our average check is \$10.65," he said. "Our competitors are still trying to figure out how we do it."

Each restaurant averages more than 500,000 visitors a year with sales of nearly \$5 million.

The menu includes ribs, steaks, salads and sandwiches -- what the company calls "made-from-scratch comfort food."

Greer said he doesn't know yet what the building costs will be.

But in 2004, the company said a new Cheddar's in Clarksville, Ind., would cost about \$3.5 million.

Greer said each Cheddar's employs more than 150 people full and part time.

"We haven't hired our management team yet," he said. "We welcome management applications."

Greer said they should be e-mailed to Morgan Allen at mallen@cheddars.biz. Allen's phone number is (859) 269-1966, ext. 119.

Greer Cos. -- owned by Greer; his father, Phil Greer; and Steve Pottinger -- also owns and operates Hilton and Intercontinental hotels. It employs nearly 2,000 people in seven states.

Brad Anderson, a partner in Gulfstream Commercial Services, which is developing Highland Pointe, said he expects "a couple more announcements in the next month or so. A lot of things are happening now."