

Japanese restaurant coming to east side

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Fans of Japanese cooking, get ready.

Sakura Blue, a Louisville-based Japanese steak, seafood and sushi restaurant, will open a 5,700-square-foot Owensboro location in the strip center next to Kohl's late this year.

Sakura means "cherry blossom."

The Courier-Journal in Louisville wrote recently: "You could think of Sakura Blue as an all-purpose restaurant, a place that can satisfy both the folks who can't get enough raw sea urchin and broiled eel and the folks who want nothing more exotic than teriyaki beef."

Owensboro's first Japanese restaurant -- Shogun of Japan -- opened at 5010 Wildcat Drive in late 2004.

-- Speaking of Kentucky 54: The strip center where Sakura Blue is headed is filling rapidly.

Building permits were picked up last week for Sally Beauty Supply and for Fun Cuts, two stores being developed there.

-- A volunteer at the International Mystery Writers Festival last week said the only complaint she heard from out-of-town visitors was that not enough local restaurants stay open after 10 p.m.

I can think of at least four 24-hour restaurants in town.

But I'm too old to eat after dark anyway.

-- Good news and bad news.

In April, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that the Owensboro metropolitan area -- Daviess, Hancock and McLean counties -- saw its per capita income increase by \$3,319 to \$27,844 between 2000 and 2005.

But the bad news is that's the smallest increase of any metro in western Kentucky or southern Indiana.

Evansville saw the largest increase -- \$5,485 to \$32,579.

Then came Elizabethtown, \$5,358 to \$29,689; Bowling Green, \$4,448 to \$27,945; and Paducah, \$3,700 to \$29,689.

The study found that Owensboro's average wage was 82 percent of the national average in 2000.

But it dropped to 81 percent in 2005.

Bowling Green's grew from 79 percent to 81 percent; Elizabethtown's, from 82 percent to 88 percent; Evansville's, from 82 percent to 95 percent; and Paducah's, from 87 percent to 88 percent.

-- Here's an interesting Father's Day tidbit.

A survey by Age Lessons and The Nielsen Co. found that 56 percent of parents of adult children -- not counting those in college -- spend more than \$1,000 a year to help them with financial problems.

One-third spend \$2,500 a year or more.

And 15 percent spend \$5,000 or more.

-- Rite Aid is growing.

Earlier this month, the pharmacy chain closed a deal to buy 1,850 Eckerd and Brooks stores and six distribution centers from Canada's Jean Coutu Group.

When the purchase is completed, Rite Aid will operate about 5,160 stores in 31 states. Rite Aid has four locations in Owensboro.

CVS is still the leader with 6,160 stores, followed by Walgreens' 5,700-plus.