

# Kentucky 54 shopping center is filling rapidly

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## Salsarita's restaurant opening this weekend

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Salsarita's Fresh Cantina is preparing to open its first Owensboro store this weekend in the strip center next to Kohl's in Woodlands Plaza.

The center, which doesn't have a name, is filling fast this summer.

Quiznos is nearing completion there.

Work has started on Sherwin-Williams, Hibbett Sports, Sally Beauty Supply and Fun Cuts stores.

And Sakura Blue, a Louisville-based Japanese restaurant, and Paradise Nails are planning locations there.

Brad Anderson, managing partner for Gulfstream Commercial Services, which is developing the center, said Thursday that only two vacancies remain in the center.

"We had the company come to look at Owensboro," said Susan Belcher, coordinator for the local Salsarita's. "They chose this site. This is the fastest-growing part of town."

Belcher managed Coffee Time Cafe -- the coffee shop inside the old Wyndall's Foodland on Kentucky 54. But, she said, "I've never been in the restaurant business before. This is exciting."

Belcher said she'll be working to build Salsarita's catering business.

The restaurant, which seats about 100, has 20 employees, she said.

The Charlotte, N.C.-based chain has grown to about 80 restaurants in 20 states in the past seven years, Paul Plocharczyk, franchise business consultant, said this week.

"The fresh-Mex concept has been around for many years," he said. "But it's really growing now. It's very healthy. Everything is prepared fresh in front of the customer."

The fast-casual chain offers burritos, tacos, quesadillas, nachos, enchiladas and salads with a variety of meats, fresh vegetables and homemade salsas, Plocharczyk said.

Salsarita's recently introduced a line of Mexican pizzas, he said.

The 10-inch pizzas, which include a veggie, barbecued chicken, taco and white pizza, already account for 5 to 7 percent of in-store sales, according to a news release.

Store hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday.