

Montana Mike's Steakhouse to open in spring

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After years of being one of Owensboro's bedrooms, Kentucky 54 should get a reputation next year as one of the city's dining rooms.

Kansas-based Montana Mike's Steakhouse will open its first Kentucky restaurant in front of Woodlands Plaza in May.

Construction is slated to begin soon, said Brad Anderson, managing partner for the company that's developing the shopping center.

Both Bob Evans Farms and Ritzy's have restaurants under construction along Kentucky 54, scheduled for openings in early 2006. And several local restaurants have opened there this year.

Montana Mike's is coming into Kentucky in a big way, with plans to open six locations over the next five years in Owensboro, Louisville, Lexington, Bowling Green and northern Kentucky.

The 7-year-old company has 20 locations in the U.S. and is expanding into Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois and Oklahoma. Plans call for 30 more restaurants by 2010.

Although the name of the rustic mountain lodge-themed steakhouse is new to Owensboro, its parent company is a familiar name to people who have been around for a few years.

Stockade Companies, which also owns Coyote Canyon restaurants, began with a single Sirloin Stockade in Oklahoma City in 1966. The company had a Sirloin Stockade at 600 Emory Drive years ago.

Anderson said he expects Montana Mike's to add 50 to 75 workers to the shopping center.

The restaurant will be at the front of the center, west of the BB&T branch, which opens later this month.

Montana Mike's describes itself as "a full-service steakhouse specializing in big portions at a great value."

The restaurant's menu features grilled chicken, baby back ribs, chicken-fried steak, catfish, salads and pastas along with steaks, which include Mike's 22-ounce sirloin, a Mile High 16-ounce ribeye and a 20-ounce Porterhouse.

The company quotes the National Cattlemen's Beef Association as projecting that spending on beef will hit a record \$71 billion this year.

The restaurants create an image of a mountain lodge. Newer locations have full bars.

Anderson said Woodlands Plaza, where Kohl's will open next spring, is negotiating with several other restaurants for outlots along Kentucky 54.