

Fried alligator, Weck's coming to The Shops

For those Journal Center-area workers who have been pining for more eating options: Pine no more. Coming in November/December are two new restaurants opening at The Shops at Presidential Plaza. With a total of 19,200 square feet of retail, the 15-acre office/retail development, which includes a Charter Bank and Chevron/McD's, is emerging at Osuna and Jefferson NE.

At The Shops, on the plaza's east side, there will soon be a Weck's For Breakfast & Lunch and catering — and to put some spice into the bland workday, The Cajun Kitchen.

Both will have outdoor patios for dining al fresco.

Doug Weckerly has operated two Duke City Weck's for more than nine years. Center leasing agent Tim MacEachen of Maestas & Ward Commercial Real Estate LLC said he asked Weckerly to join the plaza on three different occasions. But Weckerly wasn't quite ready. Finally, he agreed to take 3,600 square feet on the end farthest from Osuna.

"We think he's a good fit," MacEachen said. "There's a great demand for breakfast/lunch places and he serves linebacker-size portions. Goods and services in the area are really lagging behind the huge worker base there."

Weckerly signed a 10-year lease at Presidential Plaza, where rates range \$18 to \$20 a square foot. The new restaurant, open seven days a week, will employ 20 and accommodate 140 diners, plus 35 on the patio. The atmosphere is comfortable and casual.

"I flunked Martha Stewart," Weckerly says.

"The industrial and business traffic, freeway access, plus people from the nearby Calvary church, appeals to me about this area," he said. And the entrepreneur behind Weck's has plans for restaurant NO.4 with Downtown deal

Retail Scene



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pending.

Dekker/Perich/Sabatini Ltd.; the contractor is Realco Construction. MacEachen expects groundbreaking "any minute now." MacEachen is negotiating with a 4,500-square-foot retail tenant, bringing The Shops to 50 percent leased.

Relocating after 14 years from 1,500 square feet at 5505 Osuna NE near San Mateo is The Cajun Kitchen.

"We've just outgrown this place," said Arden Hebert-Barnes, who runs the restaurant with her parents, Lynn and Flem Hebert (pronounced "ay-BEAR"). The Heberts had a restaurant in Louisiana back in the '60s and imported their "hard-core Cajun food" to the Duke City.

"This is a bigger, new place and we have some parking issues where we are now," Hebert-Barnes said. "Plus, a lot of our customers come from Honeywell and AOL, so this will be easier for them to get to."

The Heberts signed a 10-year lease for the 2,100-square-foot end space closest to Osuna. The restaurant employs 10 and seats 100 inside and out. It is open for lunch (Monday through Friday) and dinner (Tuesday to Saturday).

"Very casual, cafe-style" is how Hebert-Barnes describes the atmosphere. "It imitates a hole-in-the-wall restaurant in New Orleans

fried catfish and alligator ("tastes like pork"), crayfish, seafood gumbo and jambalaya.

"They have incredible food and a tremendous following," MacEachen said.